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Edited by Melvin J. Lasky & Anthony Thwaite

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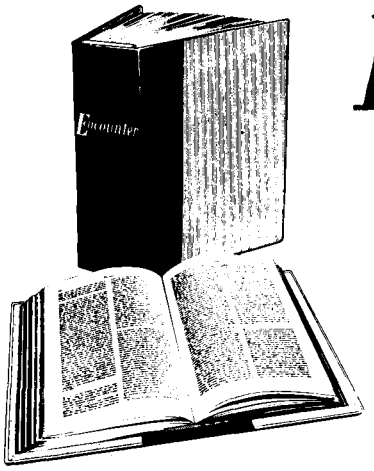

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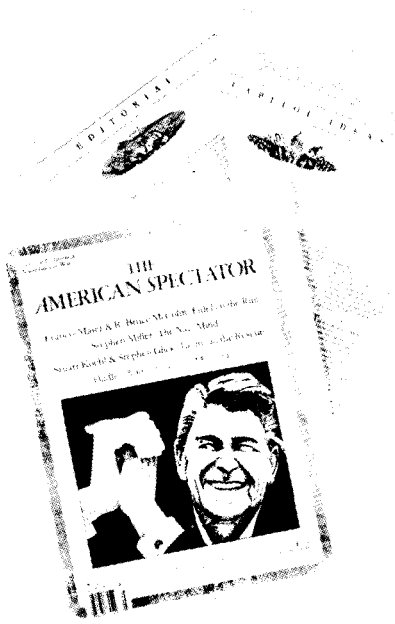

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Penelope Lively

The Emasculation of Ted Roper

JEANIE BANKS, rigid with emotion, her cardigan on inside out, muttering rehearsed words, deaf and blind to the bright morning, made her way down the village street. Past the post office, the one, two, three, four cottages, past the pub, Mrs Halliday's, the garage, the one, two, three new bungalows, the Lathams', Cardwell's yard. She stopped outside Roper's, simmering, reached out to open the gate, lost her nerve, plunged on down to the lamppost where the village ended, yanked up her resolution again, turned, aimed back, fumbled furious with the latch on Roper's gate.

The front garden a disgrace, as always, strewn with empty oil cans, plastic sacks, rusting iron objects, the excretions of Roper's hand-to-mouth odd-jobbing dealing-in-this-and-that existence. Furtive, unreliable, transacting in dirty pound notes, dodging his taxes without a doubt, down the pub every evening. Dirty beggar, cocky as a robin, sixty if he was a day.

Feeling swelled to a crescendo, and courage with it; she hammered on the door. Then again. And again. No answer. He'd be there all right, he'd be there, nine thirty in the morning, since when did Roper go out and do a decent day's work? She shoved at the side gate.

He was round the back, fiddling about with a great pile of timber, good timber at that, planks all sizes and shapes and how did he come by it one would like to know? A whole lot of tyres stacked up in one corner, stuff spilling out of the shed, filth everywhere.

"Hello, Jeanie."

She halted, breathless now. Words fail you, they do really. They leave you huffing and puffing, at a disadvantage, seeing suddenly the run in your tights, seeing yourself reflected in the eyes of others—angry, dumpy, middle-aged widow, just Jeanie Banks. In the beady spicy nasty eyes of Ted Roper, stood there in the middle of his junk like a little farmyard cock. A randy strutting bantam cock.

"What can I do for you, Jeanie?"

She said "It's not what you can do it's what's been done, that's what's the trouble."

"Trouble?" He took out tobacco, a grubby roll of cigarette papers. "Trouble?" His dirty fingers rolling, tapping, his tongue flickering over the paper.

"My Elsa's expecting."

"Expecting?" he said. "Oh—expecting." A thin smile now, a thin complacent smile. Grinning away at it, the old bastard, pleased as punch. As if it were something to be proud of, as if it did him credit even, stood there with his thumbs stuck in his trouser pockets like those boys in western films. Some boy—Ted Roper. Boy my foot, sixty if he's anything.

"That's what I said, expecting."

He put the cigarette in his mouth; thin smoke fumed into the village sunshine. Not trousers, she saw now. Jeans, jeans just like young men wear, slumped down on his thin hips, the zip sliding a bit, a fullness you couldn't miss below, stuck out too the way he stood, legs apart, thumbs in pockets.

"Well", he said, "I s'pose that'd be in the nature of things. She's getting a big girl now."

Grinning away there, wiry and perky and as blatant as you like. She felt her outrage surge.

"It's rape", she said, "That's what it damn well is. A little creature like that, a little young thing. Bloody rape." The colour rushed to her cheeks; she didn't use language like that, not she, never.

"Now, now, Jeanie. Who's to know who gave who the come on."

She exploded. She shouted, "You take that blasted cat to the vet Ted Roper and get it seen

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to, the rest of us have just about had enough there's kittens from one end of the village to the other and my Elsa was nothing but a kitten herself." She swung round and stormed to the gate. When she looked back he was still standing there, the cigarette laid on his lower lip, his jeans fraying at the crotch, the grin still on his face. "Or you'll find it done for you one of these days", she flung.

ALL THE WAY back to the cottage her heart thumped. It didn't do any good, getting yourself into a state like that, it took it out of you, she'd be jumpy all day now. Back home in the kitchen, she made herself a cup of tea. The old cat, the mother, was sprawled in the patch of sun on the mat and Elsa was in the armchair. When Jeanie came in she jumped down and shimmied across the floor, pretty, graceful, kittenish and distinctly lumpy, no doubt about it, that unmistakable pear-shape forming at the end of her. And Jeanie, subsiding into the chair, drinking her tea, eyed her and eyed the old cat, not so old come to that, five or was it six, and as she did so a whole further implication leapt into the mind—why hadn't she thought of it before, how disgusting, if it were people you could have them slapped in prison for that.

"Fact is", said her sister Pauline, that afternoon, "There's probably hardly a one in the village isn't his. Being the only tom round about, bar him on Lay's farm and he's beyond it if you ask me. So you let Ted Roper have it? Good on you, Jeanie."

Jeanie, cooler now, calmer, righteous and ever so slightly heroic, went over it all again, word for word: I said, he said, so I said, and him as cocky as you like.

"He's a cocky little so-and-so", said Pauline. "Always was. I bet he got the wind up a bit though, Jeanie, with you bawling him out, you're bigger than he is." She chuckled, "Hey, d'you remember the time they got him in the girls' playground and Marge ripped the belt off his trousers so he had to hold 'em up all afternoon? God—laugh. . . ! Donkey's years ago."

"Funny, isn't it?", Pauline went on. "There's four of us in the village still as were at school with Ted. You, me, Nellie Baker, Marge. Randy he was, too. Remember?"

"Funny he's never married", said Jeanie.

Jeanie snorted. "Out for what he can get, that one. Not that he'd get it that often, is my guess."

"Can't stand the man. Never could. 'Nother cup? Anyway, what I say is, he ought to be made to have something done about that cat. It's shocking. Shocking."

In the basket chair the old cat raucously purred; Elsa, in a patch of sunlight, lay flirting with a length of string.

"Sick of drowning kittens, I am", said Jeanie. "I'll have to get her seen to after, like I did the old cat. Shame."

"Shame."

The two women contemplated the cats.

"I mean, we wouldn't care for it, if it were you or me."

"Too right."

"Not", said Pauline, "at that time of life. That's a young creature, that is, she's got a right to, well, a right to things."

"Hysterectomy's the nearest, if it were a person."

"That's it, Jeanie. And you'd not hear of that if it were a girl. Another matter if it's in middle life."

"That cat of Roper's", said Jeanie, "must be going on twelve or thirteen."

Later, as she walked to the shop, Roper's pick-up passed her, loaded with slabs of timber, belting too fast down the village street, Roper at the wheel, one arm on the sill, a young lad beside him, one of the several who hung around him. She saw Roper see her, turn to the boy, say something, the two of them roar grinning towards the cross-roads. She stood still, seething.

"Cardwell's boy, weren't that?", said Marge Tranter, stopping also. "With Roper."

"I daresay. What they see in that old devil. . . ."

"Men's talk. Dirty stories, that stuff. Norman says he doesn't half go on in the pub, Roper. He's not a one for that kind of thing, Norman isn't. He says Roper holds out hours on end sometimes, sat there in the corner with his mates. Showing off, you know."

"Fat lot he's got to show off about", said Jeanie. "A little runt, he is. Always was. I was saying to Pauline, remember the time you. . . ."

"Pulled his trousers down, wasn't it? Don't remind me of that, Jeanie, I'll die. . . ."

"Not pulled them down, it wasn't. Took his belt."

"Anyway, Marge, I gave him an earful this

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morning, I'll tell you that. That cat of his has been at my Elsa. I went straight down there and I said look here Ted Roper. . . ."

A quarter of a mile away Ted Roper's pick-up, timber dancing in the back, dodged in and out of the traffic on the A34, overtaking at sixty, cutting in, proving itself. Cardwell's boy and Roper, blank-faced, be-jeaned, the cowboys of the shires, rode the Oxfordshire landscape.

In the village and beyond, Roper's cat—thin, rangy, one-eyed and fray-eared—went about his business.

And, according to the scheme of things, the ripe apples dropped from the trees, the *jeunesse dorée* of the area switched their allegiance from the Unicorn to the Hand and Shears, taking with them the shattering din of un-muffled exhausts and the reek of high-octane fuel, the road flooded at the railway bridge and Jeanie's Elsa swelled soft and sagging like the bag of a vacuum cleaner.

"Several at least", said Jeanie. "Half a dozen, if you ask me. Poor little thing, it's diabolical."

"There's a side to men", said Pauline, "that's to my mind just not like us and that's the only way you can put it. And I don't mean sex, nothing wrong with that when the time and the place are right. I mean. . . ."

"It's a kind of man, I'd say rather. Henry's not that way, nor was my Jim. I mean, there's men that are normal men in the proper way but don't go on about it."

"In Italy", said Pauline, "all the men are the other kind. All of them. From the word go. Young boys and all. They wear bathing costumes cut deliberately so you can see everything they've got."

"Which is something you can take as read, in a normal man. It doesn't need shouting about."

"Exactly. If I were you, Jeanie, I'd give that cat a drop of cod liver oil in her milk. She's going to need all her strength."

PERHAPS ALSO ACCORDING to the scheme of things, Ted Roper's pick-up, a while later, was involved in circumstances never clarified in a crash with Nellie Baker's Escort at the village cross-roads. No blood was shed and the pick-up, already so battle-scarred as to be impervious, lived to fight again but the Escort was crippled and Nellie Baker too shaken and confused to be able to sort out exactly what had happened except for a strong conviction that aggression had been involved. At the Women's Institute committee meeting she held forth.

"He came out of nowhere and was into me before I knew what was happening. I was either stopped or the next best thing, that I'll swear."

"What's he say?"

"Whatever he's saying's being said to the police. He took off, without a word hardly. It was Mr Latham ran me home and got the garage for me. I've told them my side of it, at the police station. It's up to them now."

"The police", said Jeanie Banks "have been down at Ted Roper's more than once. Asking about this and that. They could do some asking just now, the stuff he's got there and one wonders where it all comes from."

"The police", said Pauline, "are men. Remember Ted Roper at school, Nellie? Jeanie and I were talking about that only the other day—how we used to take him down a peg or two."

And, according to a scheme of things or not, no case was brought against Ted Roper for careless driving or dangerous driving or aggression or anything at all. Those who failed to see how that pick-up could have passed its MoT continued to speculate; Ted Roper's insurance company ignored letters from Nellie Baker's insurance company.

Jeanie's Elsa had five kittens, two of them stillborn.

Ted Roper, wiry and self-assured as his cat, continued to cruise the local roads, to make his corner of the pub an area of masculine assertion as impenetrable and complacent as the Athenaeum. From it came gusts of hoarse laughter and anecdotes which were not quite audible, bar certain key words.

It may have been the stillborn kittens that did it, as much as anything, those damp limp little rags of flesh. Or the sight of the emptied Elsa, restored to a former litheness but subtly altered, wise beyond her years. Or months.

Jeanie, tight-lipped, visited Marge to borrow her cat basket. "You'll take her to be done, then?"

"Have to, won't I? Or it'll be the same thing over again."

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"Shame."

"Just what Pauline said."

Marge, lining the cat basket with a piece of old blanket, paused. "It's like with people. Always taken for granted it must be the woman. Pills, messing about with your insides." She swung the door of the basket shut and tested the catch. "There's an alternative, Jeanie. Thought of that?"

"What do you think I was down Ted Roper's for, that time?"

"And much joy you got out of it. No, what I'm thinking of is we see to it ourselves."

The two women stared at each other over the cat basket. Marge, slowly, even rather terribly, smiled. "I wouldn't mind, I wouldn't half mind, giving Ted Roper his come-uppance."

IN A VILLAGE, people come and go all day. Women in particular—to and from the school, the shop, the bus stop, each other's houses. The little group of Jeanie, Pauline, Marge and Nellie Baker, moving in a leisurely but somehow intent way around the place that afternoon, glancing over garden walls and up the sides of cottages, was in no way exceptional. Nor, unless the observer were of a peculiarly enquiring turn of mind, was the fact that they carried, between them, a cat basket, a pair of thick leather gardening gloves, and half a pound of cod wrapped in newspaper.

Presently, the cat basket now evidently heavy and bouncing a little from side to side, they emerged somewhat breathless from the field behind the pub and made their way rather hurriedly to the garage of Nellie Baker's house, where an old Morris replaced the deceased Escort. The Morris drove away in the direction of Chipping Norton passing, incidentally, the very school playground where once, donkey's years ago, four outraged and contemptuous schoolgirls had a go at the arrogance of masculine élitism.

In a village, also, change is more quickly observed than you might think. Even change so apparently insignificant as the girth of a cat. In this case, it was habits as much as girth. A cat that has previously roamed and made the night hideous, and which takes instead to roosting, eyes closed and paws folded, in the sun on the tops of walls, idling away the time, will be noticed.

And the more so when the change eerily extends to the cat's owner.

At first it was just the paunch jutting below the sagging belt of Ted Roper's jeans. Then, balancing the paunch, came a fullness to the face, a thickening of the stubbly cheeks, a definite double chin. "Put on a bit, haven't you, Ted?" people said. "Have to cut down on the beer, eh." And Ted would wryly grin, without the perky come-back that might have been expected. With physical expansion went a curious decline of those charismatic qualities: the entourage of youths dropped off. Some nights, Ted sat alone in the pub, staring into his glass with the ruminative and comfortably washed-up look of his seniors. A series of mishaps befell the pick-up: punctures stranding Ted on remote roads, a catastrophic fuel leak, a shattered windscreen. It was driven, presently, in a more sedate way; it no longer rode or cruised but rattled and pottered.

It was as though the old assertive stringy cocky Ted were devoured and enveloped, week after week, by this flabby amiable lethargic newcomer. The jeans gave way to a pair of baggy brown cords. He began to leave his corner of the public bar and join the central group around the fireplace; there, the talk was of onions, the ills of the nation, weather and fuel prices.

And, in the village or outside his own gate, meeting Nellie Roper, say, or Marge or Pauline or Jeanie Banks, he would pass the time of day, initiate a bit of a chat, offer small gifts by way of surplus timber, useful lino offcuts, the odd serviceable tyre.

"Poor old so-and-so", said Pauline, "They're easily taken down, aren't they? That's what comes of depending on the one thing. You can almost feel sorry for them."

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Can the Social Democrats Devise Policies for Political Power?

Some Suggestions & Reflections—By STEPHEN HASELER

"SOCIAL DEMOCRACY", much discounted in the 1970s, is now back on the political agenda. The opinion polls, local elections—and Roy Jenkins' and Shirley Williams' by-election performances—provide solid evidence that the British public is taking the new Social Democratic Party extremely seriously. Those of us who have argued over many years (often in the columns of ENCOUNTER) for "a re-alignment" cannot be too surprised that the SDP has seemingly made more headway in a few short months than Labour managed (as it slowly supplanted Lloyd George's Liberals) in 25 years at the beginning of the century.

Of course the SDP has yet to consolidate its initial momentum by proven performance at a general election. It is still conceivable—in all humility it ought to be conceded—that what we have been witnessing in 1981 is but a grander, more weighty "Orpington-style revival of the centre" which may disappear like a snowflake in early spring when the novelty and euphoria have worn off. To break the mould of British party politics in an era of national pessimism and decline is no easy task. The temptations of certainty and familiarity could still prove more alluring than radical departures from political habit.

Increasingly, though, the odds must be in favour of a substantial Social Democratic/Liberal representation in the next House of Commons. There are two compelling reasons for this. First, there is the general crisis of governmental authority throughout the West which seems to bring low any incumbent administration (the Bonn SPD/FDP victory in West Germany being an exception). A simple, but brutal, electoral fact should suffice to underscore this point for Britain and the Conservatives: no administration in Britain that has run for a term of over 18 months has been re-elected since 1959. It is unlikely that the pattern now set for over two-and-a-half decades will be broken in 1984.

Secondly, there is the crisis of representation which, over the long term, I still believe will affect Labour rather more than the Conservatives. The vast army of skilled British workers have in essence been deserted by Labour as it has moved to the Left, and this pivotal electoral group (some amongst whom voted for Mrs Thatcher last time) may now be secured by the new party. At least they *ought* to be secured; for a party of liberty must have a substantial beach-head within the working-class vote, particularly in a country like Britain—or all is lost.

In his recent book, an account of the meetings and discussions in 1980 which led to the formation of the SDP in 1981, Ian Bradley rightly highlights one of the differences of strategy we tried to settle during the intense gestation period.[1] Should, as some of us argued, the party's initial appeal be simply to the disaffected Labour constituency, to be topped up later by accretions from the disillusioned middle class? Or should it be bolder, reaching out immediately for as wide a constituency as possible with all the attendant risks of incoherence? In the end I think we have got it about right. We are not a

STEPHEN HASELER *is a member of the Policy Committee of the SDP. He is a founder member of Britain's new Social Democratic Party and one of the original supporters of the "Limehouse Declaration." He has been Chairman of the Social Democratic Alliance since 1975. His books include "The Gaitskellites" (1969) and "The Death of British Democracy" (1976). His most recent article for* ENCOUNTER, *"On the Left of Centre", was published in April 1981, and a previous piece, "A New Centre Party?", appeared in April 1980.*

[1] *Breaking the Mould? The Birth and Prospects of the Social Democratic Party.* By IAN BRADLEY. Martin Robertson, £8.95, paper £2.95.

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"Labour Party Mark II" with a large intellectual baggage of socialism and all the institutional paraphernalia of trade-union affiliation, both deeply unpopular in the SDP's natural constituency. Nor are we a "Liberal Party Mark II"—embracing some of the wilder shores of libertarianism and radical *chic* (including unilateralism) which would leave us with nothing to say to the voters of Basildon and Harlow and Warrington.

Obviously the temptation for Social Democrats is to count upon an easy electoral breakthrough next time and so comport ourselves as to take full advantage of public unhappiness by creating the image of another "soft option." This approach might see the SDP into the seats of power but it would provide it with no authority to halt the country's decline. If the promise the Alliance is now re-kindling is extinguished a few months after election then the consequences in terms of further polarisation and extremism are only too obvious.

Social Change before Economics

SO, IN THE INEVITABLE PHRASE, "What is to be done?" What is it that Social Democrats should actually stand for? And what should they *do* that no one else has either attempted or achieved?

The first priority is to identify with the central British problem. This seemingly banal injunction is nevertheless of some moment if one takes the view that our public policy has been overly concerned

Ideological Baggage

THE OVERWHELMING *impressions of the Labour Party's new discussion paper, "A Socialist Foreign Policy", are how much ideological baggage it is carrying, how bizarre are its priorities and how static and defensive it all is. Of the baggage, the most important piece is a nagging anti-Americanism. We are not three paragraphs into the pamphlet before we are told that*

> **"our membership of NATO cannot mean that we allow ourselves to be drawn into the vortex of United States foreign policy, particularly as this appears to be returning to the old-style imperialist aggression in Central America and elsewhere."**

Then, what are we to make of this piece of history:

> **"The defeat of Nazi Germany . . . created a situation where the Soviet Union felt constrained to abandon its former alliances and when the United States of America felt correspondingly strong enough to impose its economic force on a submissive and grateful Europe."**

TO BE SURE, *the pamphlet graciously admits later on that*

> **"it is difficult to confirm a desire by the United States to 'colonise' Europe in any general sense."**

But Ernest Bevin must be spinning in his grave at the clear implication that Marshall Aid and the restoration of Europe's economy were manifestations of American imperialism which ought to be thrown off along with that monstrous creature of the American imagination—the supranational customs union, the EEC.

HISTORICALLY SPEAKING, this revisionist rubbish is not worth taking seriously, but it implies an acceptance of a Left-wing view of the world which regards capitalist America as being as menacing as—and far more reprehensible than—the Soviet Union. In the section on NATO it is never once acknowledged that Britain and Europe are deeply dependent on the United States for nuclear or even conventional defence.

A whole chapter is devoted to "the United States threat" in Latin America, but not a line to the problems of trying to deal with threats to Europe's oil supplies in the Middle East (whether from internal revolutions or Soviet adventurism) apart from a lengthy denunciation of the last Labour government's tolerance of the Shah and a suggested withdrawal of support for the Sultan of Oman.

THE FLIGHT FROM REALITY is, in fact, the dominant theme of the paper. The British people are invited to turn their back on the EEC without any indication of how they are to avoid retaliation, political as well as economic, from their former partners; to half-turn their back on the United States and NATO following the example either of France and leaving the military alliance, or (inspiring thought) of Norway and remaining a full member "whilst criticising and opposing some of its policies from within."

David Watt
in THE TIMES (*London*)

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(not to say obsessed) with approaching the "British problem", or "the British disease", in *exclusively* economic terms and contexts. The literature of our national decline is replete with economic and industrial explanations, analyses, and prescriptions. This is hardly surprising: it is natural to assume that an economic problem has an economic solution. Yet it remains an awesome fact that British politicians have experimented with virtually every economic strategy imaginable (imaginable, that is, within the European OECD context) ... and *all* have been found wanting. The Labour Party's "Alternative Strategy"—now intriguingly endorsed by every member of its Shadow Cabinet—is about the only "solution" yet to be tried. The certainty, based upon all the available evidence from around the world, that Tony Benn's State Socialism can only make our material life much worse, and also cut into our political freedoms, not to mention the wreckage of our relations with the Western political community, does not apparently detract from its potential allure.

The sources of the decline in the British economy have, unfortunately, little to do with the merits or demerits of the various economic strategies which have been pursued. This is not to suggest that *at the margin* one approach may not be better than another. Nor is it to suggest that the present debate between "orthodox monetarists" (if that is what they are, bearing in mind the present money-supply figures, the state of the PSBR, and the public sector) and the "neo-Keynesian expansionists" (if that is what they are, bearing in mind the limited reflationary package that is on offer from the "Tory wets" and the near certainty that its implementation would lead to a sterling crisis which would blow it off course) is an empty one. It is of some importance that the debate over inflation and unemployment be conducted properly. Nor is it to argue that the quest for growth should be abandoned.

It is, however, to argue that British economic policy-making of all varieties has essentially been constrained by powerful underlying non-economic factors: by the country's social culture and structure and their institutional expressions and rigidities. This way of looking at the British problem is hardly new or original, but its most recent advocates seem to have been ignored as the triumph of "Econocentrism" has established itself almost in inverse proportion to the tragedy of Britain's economy. In their own several ways, Professor G. C. Allen, Sir Alec Cairncross, Sir Monty Finniston, the Anglo-American economists around the Brookings Institution, James Bellini, and Professor David Marquand all seem to have been directing our attention towards British society and social attitudes rather than to economic theory.[2] Bellini put the point most forcibly in his recent rather apocalyptical work *Rule Britannia: A Progress Report for Domesday 1986*:

> "It is now clear that the reasons for Britain's economic crisis are indeed primarily social. Britain's social system—pre-industrial, immobile, resistant to change—stands in the way of creating an economic structure that can fit the country for the challenges and dangers of the 21st century ..."

TO UNDERSCORE this argument the lessons to be learnt from the major industrial competitors should be properly understood. Too often in comparing ourselves unfavourably with these competitors we make great proclamations to the effect that the origins of our relative economic sluggishness have something to do with *our* wrong-headed economic policies and *their* correct ones. The truth

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[2] G. C. Allen, *The British Disease* (Institute of Economic Affairs, 1976). See also, Sir Alec Cairncross (ed.), *Britain's Economic Prospects Reconsidered* (1971), in the summary of which Sir Alec argues:

> "the long-run relationships that should form the basis of growth policy seem to rest on social and political values at least as heavily as on economic variables. ...

See also *Britain's Economic Performance, 1980* (Brookings Institution, 1980) which concludes with the declaration that "the productivity problem originates deep within the social system."

My party colleague David Marquand argued powerfully in ENCOUNTER (December 1980) that what we are seeing in Britain is not the crisis of any particular economic system or theory but rather

> "a crisis of the British class system, the British education system, the British banking system, British trade unionists, British civil servants, and British politicians."

I agree with this; but if it is Britain that is the problem rather than some generalised economic doctrine, then David Marquand's more recent (*Open Forum 5*, SDP discussion document) attacks upon the "harsh doctrines of early capitalism" emanating from "Thatcherite and Reaganite bunkers of Whitehall and Washington" (and we might add Social-Democratic Bonn too) are difficult to understand. David Marquand goes on in his recent pamphlet to counterpoise general western economic strategy to that of John Maynard Keynes and argues

> "Social Democracy still stands or falls on its ability to practice what he preached."

No one can be sure what Keynes would say were he alive today; but I am not so certain that he would be as disparaging about recent general Western economic strategies as Marquand suggests. After all, his whole early economic strategy was based upon low or nil inflation rates.

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is that other more successful Western nations pursue a whole range of economic strategies from approximations to the Social Market economy through to more traditional Social Welfare "Keynesianism." Some have Incomes Policies; some do not. That they *all* have a greater ability to unleash productive forces than do the British cannot be a superficial function of economic strategy alone.

The challenge for Social Democrats here is obvious (and we would not have included the word "Social" in our party name merely by some accident of contemporary political nomenclature). The British crisis of economic competitivity cannot possibly be solved by the application of a particular economic strategy *unaccompanied by social change*. If, because of Britain's antiquated social structure and old-fashioned cultural values, a particular economic or financial policy is "politically impossible"—because its implementation calls forth massive resistance from institutions which are in part the expression of such antiquity—then it is foolish to attempt to impose it without an allied strategy for social modernisation.

For instance, Professor Alan Walters in the Prime Minister's Downing Street office can attempt to re-introduce "market forces" and "profitability." But in a less than entrepreneurial culture such as Britain's, he cannot unleash the necessary initiative and dynamism to improve productivity and competitivity *in time* to compensate for the medium-term horrendous unemployment which is also a consequence of the strategy. Similarly, and before we get too smug in the political centre, Professor P. R. G. Layard (at the London School of Economics and at the SDP headquarters in Cowley Street) may find it difficult to properly pursue his Incomes Policy—albeit by the novel and intriguing mechanism of an "inflation tax"—particularly in the public sector, without encountering severe opposition from Britain's premier antiquated institution, the Trade Union movement. I suspect, too, that Professor Wynn Godley at Cambridge will find his "alternative strategy" of a siege economy dumped by organised labour. Again, society (in Britain) defeats economy.

In sum, all we can ask of economic policy over the coming years is not a cure-all for regeneration, but rather a mix of approaches which will allow us to hold the line—to keep us this side of the kind of social instability which could take us out of the Western trading-system altogether—while we have yet another run, this time a serious dash, for social reform and modernisation. And for those who are tempted to argue that it is all too late to try our hand again at social reform there is only one riposte: what else? There is no alternative.

Modernisation

IN SETTING the agenda for Social Democracy in the 1980s we must give policies which deal with "antiquity" pride of place. Social Democrats, in all their variegated forms, have historically proclaimed their commitment to creating in Britain a modern and "Open Society." However one wishes to define this impulse—and it can be declared upon many levels, political, social, economic, intellectual—it was what in the late 1950s brought many young people of my generation into politics and into the Labour Party.

Yet today few local observers (and no outside observers) would describe Britain as a modern and open society, certainly not by comparison with other industrial nations, and not by comparison with those in North America and Australasia. All the apparently banal and cliché-ridden social criticisms of the '50s and '60s still hold good. We have not really been able to open our society to the talents; considerable social constraints remain upon enterprise and merit. "Classicism" still prevails—even now—over science and technology; style over substance (just look at our quality newspapers); amateurism and generalism still have a premium, though few wish to admit it, over professionalism; leisure and languor over attitudes to work—and the rest of it, once so dramatically spelled out in these pages in Arthur Koestler's *Suicide of a Nation* (July 1963). Our renowned liberality, tolerance, and civility are still really restricted to the upper reaches of our society. Our social stability (or what is left of it) is not the product of the wide diffusion of humane values throughout the land, but more to do with residual deference than anything else. In short, the British, even in the 1980s, are a liberal (though secretive) society *at the top* but not a particularly democratic or modern one. It is simply untrue for Mrs Thatcher to argue (as she did at this year's Tory Party conference) that only "Council Housing" is the last vestige of feudalism in Britain. It was not wrong to have tried to make the point, but it should have been directed much more widely, particularly before such a feudal-minded audience of aristocratic provenance.

ONE ENTERS INTO sensitive and delicate territory in arguing for social modernisation. The very term

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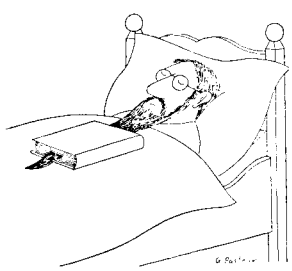
grates upon English sensibility, and surely this is part of the problem.[3] It touches too many raw nerves and interests and brings us up against the embarrassing problem of "class."

To act decisively upon the British class problem will help to establish the SDP's radical credentials—for such an offensive goes, as radicalism should, to the root of our problems. The search for "classlessness"—an objective at the heart of the SDP's original "Limehouse Declaration"—can become the central idea and purpose which distinguishes the Social Democrats from the Conservative and Labour parties. And it is a purpose which can also be easily shared with our electoral allies, the Liberals. It is the irreducible common factor in the centre of British politics.

It has also been a *traditional* concern of social democrats—of whatever party (or of none)—which has separated them from most kinds of conservatives and from socialists. The British conservative tradition has, by and large, been uninterested in getting to grips with Britain's baffling and unique social problems. This stems primarily from their traditional animus towards social enquiry and, more understandably, modern sociology. Labour's New Left, interested in society, simply get the British problem wrong. They ignore

[3] A Socialist friend of mine recently confided that he found the very title of David Owen's recent book *Face The Future* distasteful. He admitted that he preferred the warmth of a nostalgia for the past. This, by the way, appeared to be his only objection to the book.

Three Mottoes



"WE CAN never return to the alleged innocence and beauty of the closed society. Our dream of heaven cannot be realised on earth. Once we begin to rely upon our reason, and to use our powers of criticism, once we feel the call of personal responsibility, and with it, the responsibility of helping to advance knowledge, we cannot return to a state of implicit submission to tribal magic. For those who have eaten from the tree of knowledge, paradise is lost. The more we try to return to the heroic age of tribalism, the more surely do we arrive at the Inquisition, at the Secret Police, and at a romanticised gangsterism. . . .

We can return to the beasts. But if we wish to remain human, then there is only one way, the way into the open society. We must go on into the unknown, the uncertain and insecure, using what reason we have to plan for both security *and* freedom."

SIR KARL POPPER,
The Open Society and its Enemies (1945)

"HE BELIEVED *that the ultimate goal of life was life itself; that the day and the hour were ends in themselves, not a means to another day or another experience. He believed that remote ends were a dream, that faith in them was a fatal illusion; that to sacrifice the present or the immediate and foreseeable future to these distant ends must always lead to cruel and to futile forms of human sacrifice. . . . He believed in reason, scientific methods, individual action, empirically discovered truths; but he tended to suspect that faith in general formulas, laws, prescription in human affairs was an attempt, sometimes catastrophic, always irrational, to escape from the uncertainty and unpredictable variety of life into the false security of our own symmetrical fantasies."*

SIR ISAIAH BERLIN,
"Herzen and his Memoirs",
Against the Current (1981)

"THE MOST fundamental ideal of those who shared this outlook was social justice—but it was an ideal in no way inspired by class hatred. They were equally devoted to democracy and personal freedom. They believed in tolerance and they understood the need for compromise. They were for the rational and practical, and suspicious of large general ideas which on examination turned out to have no precise content. . . . Above all, while accepting the ultimate emotional basis of moral valuation, they had great faith in the power of reason both to find the answers to social problems and to persuade men to see the light. They were for the pursuit of truth to the bitter end, through the patient and unswerving application of logical thought."

HUGH GAITSKELL, intro. to Evan Durbin,
"The Politics of Democratic Socialism" (1940)
in W. T. Rodgers (ed.), *Hugh Gaitskell* (1964)

[THESE *three mottoes preface the text of a pamphlet entitled "Russet-Coated Captains: The Challenge of Social Democracy", an Open Forum pamphlet by David Marquand published by the SDP (1981).*]

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the complexities and subtleties of our inhibiting social structure and impose upon it a false and simple analysis of class—and "class war"—with class determined exclusively by Marx's old relationship to "the productive process." Although many of them claim to believe in an ideal of "classlessness", their ideology of sharpening class differences, or raising class consciousness, or destroying class enemies is inimical to it; a "classless" emphasis would not serve their political interests, for it would deny them the social material for their chiliastic appeal.

Social Democrats have approached the British class problem in much more subtle terms than the Left. Rejecting the crudities of outdated Marxist analysis, but not the notion that classes exist, they have tended to place at the heart of their understanding a notion of cultural and social absorption. The key to unlocking or unfreezing the British class system lies not with "abolishing Capitalism" but rather with dealing with what Anthony Crosland described as "the deep marks of the hereditary aristocratic society from which [British society] descends", or with what R. H. Tawney described as the "lingering aroma of the aristocratic legend." Anthony Sampson has recently touched upon this question of social absorption and placed it in its contemporary industrial context:

> "British industry, given half a chance, always tended to settle down into the comfortable style of the country house . . . . While German industry took on the characteristics of a Prussian regiment the British preferred the more relaxed and class-conscious tradition of Upstairs Downstairs with some accretions from Oxbridge high tables."
>
> *The Observer*, 8 July 1979

The persistence of unmodern values—or, in a metaphorical sense, of "feudal values"—which have somehow retained their hold at the top of British life is our most haunting national reality. This truth cannot be easily dismissed by economic statistics, by the indices of social mobility which Professor Peter Bauer and Sir Keith Joseph, among others, have used to show that British society is more open and more mobile than liberal-left egalitarians often acknowledge.[4] These statistics, even conceding for the sake of argument their validity, simply cannot take into account the fact of social and cultural absorption: which, in Britain, simply transfers unmodern values and traditional aspirations to the upwardly mobile—values and attitudes which place a discount on the qualities and characteristics necessary for producing and competing in the modern world.[5] What could be called the Thomas Mann turn-of-the-century *Buddenbrooks* cycle—from ambitions for mere money through to social position and thence to the life of leisurely "high culture", all in three generations—lives on even in contemporary *Britain*, debilitated by a declining industrial base and besieged by foreign competition.

The British & Class

IN ATTEMPTING properly to modernise our society Social Democrats will be presented with two grievous problems. First, there really must be a question-mark over whether we British are truly prepared to live with the problems which modernity will bring with it. Consider the case of Richard Hoggart (and I refer to him in this context because I take him to be one of the most sensitive and profound social critics of the post-War years). In an essay in 1958 he argued:

> "We often accuse the Americans of false democratic *bonhomie*. To me the most chastening aspect of life over there is the realisation that people at all levels of wealth and power really can, at times, look at each other face to face, that they can believe that each is as good as the next man. When two Englishmen meet for the first time, by contrast, one can almost hear the built-in fruit machines of class assessment whirring."

Still very pertinent. But then comes the *caveat:*

> "Yet we could still find a decent classlessness, one fed not by the admirable American dream but by a fusing of the lived-into virtues still to be found in all our classes."

Why not the admirable American dream—if it is indeed considered to be admirable? What is a *decent* classlessness (i.e. what is an *indecent* classlessness)? Is there still lurking, even in a Hoggart, in the commendation of the "lived-into

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[4] Peter Bauer, *Class on the Brain: The Cost of a British Obsession* (Centre for Policy Studies, 1978).

[5] As Richard Hoggart once put it:

> "One of the most difficult feats for an Englishman is simply to become educated . . . in seeking to be so he is pushed towards a whole new set of social forms, a new range of ways to speak, laugh, and cry. In the degree to which he is sensitive he is likely to be carrying on throughout a love-hate duel with social manners."
>
> *Speaking to Each Other* (1970), p. 41.

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virtues . . . to be found in all our classes", a yearning for the comforting warmth of decent social differences and stratification?[6]

How widely is this longing shared today? Probably by most in office in the Labour movement. Probably, too, among those on the Tory side who conjure up Disraeli, and talk disparagingly about "two nations", but do so in the language of only one. It was the great 19th-century Tory democrat who in *Sybil* brought into political imagery

> "two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other's thoughts and feelings, as if they were . . . inhabitants of different planets."

But he was also the Tory whose image of England was that of an agrarian and static society, who feared the middle classes and who "had of course to reconcile himself to the industrial revolution" but hoped that the new class

> "might eventually be remoulded into an industrial aristocracy conscious . . . of the fact that it was but a part of the organic union of which the English nation consisted."[7]

"Organic" yes, but class-based too. That British adversarial political discourse can, in 1981, take place on the intellectual basis of a clash between New-Left Marxist rhetoric, on the one hand, and antiquated notions of "One Nation", on the other, may suggest to some what an absurd place and unserious market-place of ideas it has become.

Secondly, there is the problem of time. To attack the British disease via social structures and the social system will take time, and it may not be available. The Conservative governments of the 1950s had a decade, a "window of opportunity" of post-War affluence, during which time serious social reforms could have modernised British society and equipped it for the future. The signs were pointing to an emerging classlessness. The 1944 Education Act (with its major contribution, the grammar schools) was beginning to work its way through the system. Michael Young could write of *The Rise of the Meritocracy*; George Orwell's War-time prediction of a coming British civilisation which would "belong to people who are most at home in and definitely *of* the modern world" was, in a way, coming true.[8] Yet the Tories failed because their heart was not in it.

THE WILSON GOVERNMENTS which followed were no better. Arguably the whole future of Britain may have depended upon Harold Wilson—on his being able, by reform, by his quintessential classless appeal, to take the edge off collective class resentments and thereby weaken the extreme Left. To be sure, Wilson was beset by economic difficulties the moment he came into office; but the ample theoretical work of the "classless" revisionists which formed the basis for Wilson's policies saw the road to a modernised Britain through Fabian schemes for redistribution of income and wealth; these were to be engineered by public ownership, higher social spending, central planning (and the like); and they proved to be schemes which made us *all* less well-off. No attempt was made to create new economic space for initiative and enterprise when a species of "early Thatcherism" might have worked. No attempt was made to deal with antiquated institutions: trade union reform was avoided; the Labour Party's historical sentiments for state socialism catered to; and, by making pals into barons (and baronesses), the House of Lords *enhanced*.

Now that old-style social divisions have

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[6] British television seems to share this yearning or knows how it must be fed (on all channels). One can hardly turn it on without catching a lavishly produced piece of nostalgia largely to do with class. *Brideshead Revisited, Upstairs Downstairs, When the Boat Comes In, To The Manor Born*, are but examples of a much wider preoccupation.

[7] This is T. E. Utley's recent depiction of Disraeli which he set out in *One Nation: 100 Years On*, (Conservative Political Centre Lecture, 1981), pp. 6–7.

[8] "The Lion and the Unicorn", in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell* (1968), p. 78. Orwell, I might add, positively welcomed this development. There was no trace of regret for older times and values in his depiction of what he reckoned might be the "germs of the future England" to be found in "Slough, Dagenham, Barnet, Letchworth, Hayes—everywhere indeed on the outskirts of great towns" and producing a "rather restless, cultureless life centring around tin foods . . . the radio and the internal combustion engine".

Contrast this attitude to that attributed recently by Michael Howard to Harold Nicolson (another man of the educated English liberal-left, but rather more representative, I fear, than Orwell):

> "Anxious to help the Common Man, he could not bear common little men. . . . He hated the awful bogus matiness of politics, especially Labour politics, and although his social conscience drove him ultimately into the Labour Party he never concealed how utterly revolting he found everyone and everything connected with it." *The Sunday Times* (25 October 1981)

These attitudes—widely held throughout the political class—helped stop in its tracks any real social transformation in Britain. We may have our shortages and stoppages and production problems, but in the fabrication of such psycho-social tragicomedy we are efficient to a fault.

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worsened rather than improved—and indeed are reaching an alarmingly intense level—the fatal temptation must be to give up altogether on any process of social modernisation. But, in the absence of modernising efforts, the older social classes and attitudes—aristocratically-imbued business on the one hand, and 19th-century proletarianism, led by quite clever Marxists on the other—will not be eroded or fade away. Precisely the opposite: they will harden into the forms which will define nothing less than a coming civil war.

Outlines of Reform

IT IS HERE that the SDP/Liberal alliance can make its historic contribution. First, by its very existence and continuing electoral success it virtually ensures the continuance of a social consensus and coalition politics. Since the War we have always been blessed with coalition governments, for both Labour and Conservative administrations have spanned a spectrum of political opinion. The fear now must be that an incoming Labour administration would no longer do so, and would take us down the road to "full and irreversible" socialism. But the arrival of the SDP/Liberal alliance can guarantee a decade or more of coalition governments which can at least offer some political and legislative stability, and (which, arguably, economic affluence could have given us in the 1950s and '60s) a further breathing space for reform. Nothing else will.

But what are the broad outlines of the reform needed to deal with Britain's problem of social antiquity? Measures for constitutional and institutional change must obviously be high on the agenda. The liberal-democratic state and society, as they have developed over many years in Britain without upheaval (and because of lack of upheaval), contain elements both of our industrial-capitalist past and of our aristocratic traditions. No programme for modernisation can ignore the need to reform, even quite surgically, the aristocratic vestiges and overgrowth; and these are to be found in profusion in our constitutional arrangements, and the way we try to work Parliamentary democracy itself. Although over the centuries, in response to the various social and industrial revolutions, the pattern of recruitment to Parliament has changed, Parliament itself still retains many of the features of an older, privileged, oligarchic, semi-democratic order.

It is one thing to defend Parliamentary democracy against the extreme Left—as has been the task of a handful of Social Democrats for ten years in the battle within the Labour Party. The Trotskyite aim of subverting representative democracy by establishing a single-minded *party* control over the legislature had to be exposed. However, it is patently absurd for Social Democrats to go on defending those aspects of our Parliamentary government that are plainly illegitimate by any modern democratic test. For instance, House of Lords reform (or even its abolition, as long as we substitute for it an elected second chamber) is long overdue. It is a measure of the clumsiness of the Centre-Right that they have allowed the former Lord Stansgate, Tony Benn, to run with this issue for so long.

There is also great scope in democratising the electoral system for the lower house. If we are to be modern democrats then we should appear as adherents of Tocqueville rather than prisoners of Burke and Bagehot. Proportional representation is important, but primaries even more so. PR will simply create three or four party machines in the Commons instead of two; and party hierarchies, which then make deals with each other, will still go unchecked by popular opinion. Primaries, together with the judicious use of referenda, will add a popular element to the constitution.[9]

THE MORE I dwell upon the reasons for the advance of the extreme Left in Britain I am convinced that it has something to do with their spurious cornering of the market of democratic rhetoric, while the forces of freedom are always forced back into defending obviously indefensible institutions and pre-democratic values. When Michael Foot asserts, in a chilling tone, "We are the Many, they are the Few", or when Tony Benn calls for "greater democratisation" of British institutions, they are both inverting the truth of their position. But the rhetoric still appears to find credence.

Decentralisation is another constitutional change which, if it properly succeeds in diffusing power away from the centre (from Whitehall and the mandarins in the higher reaches of the Civil Service), can have modernising and democratic effects.

But if we are to reform the antiquated aristo-

[9] As Ronald Butt has argued (ENCOUNTER, March 1979), "Parliamentary democracy is going wrong not because it is democratic but because it is not democratic enough. . . ."

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cratic elements of the constitution, a programme of modernisation must also confront the proletarian mirror-images of the obsolete values and practices of old Upper England. Democratisation of the trade unions (primarily by secret postal ballots for the whole membership to elect its trade-union officials) and an offensive against trade-union legislative privileges must be part of any radical programme. It will do no harm to the new party and Alliance to be seen as more robust—even more "right-wing"—than the Conservatives on this issue of illegitimate trade-union power and practices. Social Democrats, in taking on the union problem, will also start with a positive advantage over the Conservatives: we are not, quite rightly, thought of as the political representatives either of the vested interests of capital or of the professions. A classless national party must adopt an even-handed approach to social interests: it must look seriously at policies to open up all careers to talents, and to deal with obvious excesses of corporate power.

The problems of antiquity and class will hardly be dealt with by constitutional and institutional reform alone. I am afraid that we are inevitably drawn back into the more profound, and intractable, problems of social policy where we can locate most of the mistakes and missed opportunities of post-War governments. Let me take two examples where quasi-feudal structures and attitudes remain. Why, for instance, should we not be in favour of selling—or even *giving away*, where appropriate—government-owned council houses to their tenants?

SECONDLY, the great education issue. For almost a year now, or since its inception, the Social Democrat Party has been trapped in a fruitless debate about private education, as though "fee paying" or "non-fee paying" was the momentous issue on which the future of the country depended. This debate must be transcended by focusing attention upon the two great deficiencies of British education, which simply mirror (if they do not cause) problems throughout our society. There is the continuing fact of an anti-vocational bias which runs throughout our education from secondary to university level. Professor G. C. Allen summed it all up in trenchant fashion. The public schools' chief weakness, he argues, is their "failure to provide leaders equipped to manage Britain's economy in general, and her industry in particular."[10] In the University sector he rightly turns the spotlight on Oxford and Cambridge, where the "anti-vocational bias, the concept of a general mental culture divorced from professional needs as the sole, or the chief, *raison d'être* of a university", still persists. The other educational problem is mobility. Our present secondary education system is completely frozen into a two-sidedly antagonistic structure broadly reflecting and perpetuating class divisions (with, at the extremes, the privileged life of the public-school boy and the ugly proletarian "skinhead" sub-culture). Whatever possessed the powers-that-be to abolish the great mediating social institution—and ladder of social mobility—the grammar schools? We probably cannot bring them back, but we certainly can start experimenting with new ideas in the state sector.

Abroad

IF THE TASK for Social Democrats at home is to modernise institutions and society to the point where we can properly compete as a member of the Western family of nations, then the objective abroad—in foreign and defence policy—must be to keep us within that family. The American and European members of the family are now quarrelling, and some even fear that divorce is on the horizon. Because of our recent history, Social Democrats may be tempted to take an overly "Eurocentric" view of the world in the mounting tensions between Washington and some of the West European continental capitals. Apart from the potential electoral consequences of being dubbed "the party of Brussels" there are also profound strategic considerations at stake. There can be no question of our leaving the EEC; our trading relationships are now such that it would be a national economic calamity. However, at the same time, we had better realise that the original high aspirations for "European Unity" are now over. Political (i.e. federal) union is a chimera. Europe has no integrated defence system. There is no common currency. One looks in vain for a coordinated economic response to the key decisions—on interest rates, inflation, unemploy-

[10] Professor Allen, in *The British Disease* (1976), draws in part upon the works of Professors Michael Postan and Ronald Dore and Charlotte Erickson as he lambasts our educational system, and our general culture, for "anti-manufacturing snobbery . . . the cult of the amateur . . . disdain for trade" and for neglecting technical and business education. A fascinating account of the 19th-century roots of this problem, particularly as it applied to teaching in the public schools, is to be found in Correlli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power* (1972).

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ment—which are still taken in Washington. Furthermore, a pan-European "peace" movement is on the march.

In this environment we can hardly further risk alienating our major Western ally. In any event, many British Social Democrats are by temperament, instinct, and tradition "Atlanticists" and will doubtless resist being tempted into the growing anti-American lobby, either by the Liberal Assembly or by any residual resentments about the pro-European campaigns of the early 1970s. In this connection I found it dispiriting to see, in Wayland Kennet's and Elizabeth Young's recent SDP pamphlet on disarmament,[11] Britain described as a "hanger-on of the United States"—rather in the same spirit that Tony Benn calls the UK a "colony."

The "disarmament" movement in Western Europe is playing up remorselessly to nasty anti-American sentiments and spurious pan-European longings. I fancy that Europe's unilateralist guru, E. P. Thompson, an English countryside intellectual, looking out of his window on to the Worcestershire fields, reckons he has discovered the impulse, and the potential coalition, which will split NATO apart. After Euro-Communism, we have Euro-nationalism.

> "If there is a common notion that is beginning to conduct the ensemble it is that of a peaceful European opinion acting as a third negotiator between the super-powers, with the ultimate objective of re-unifying European societies and culture."[12]

The movement is also liberally laced with nostalgic appeals to pastoralism (by supporting the Sicilian cooperative farmers and Larzac shepherds in their local opposition to the possible placement of Cruise Missiles) and to a pacifistic European Protestant ethos. All of this is skilfully counterpoised to what is conjured up as the rapacious, commercial, transatlantic super-power, out to destroy the gentle, peaceful, even (in the green heyday of ecology) rural values of "Olde England" and "Old Europe."

Thus we can see how the neutralists are beginning to use European sensibilities and primitive anti-Americanism both to further the notion of a moral neutrality between East and West and to decouple Europe from America. Social Democrats should have no part of it. One doesn't have to be an Oxonian to remember the Oxford Pledge, and to note that we have been here before. The paradox of pacifism—and its tragedy (in 1914, in 1939)—is that a one-sided movement's cry for peace only makes for war: would-be aggressors are encouraged, not deterred.

OF COURSE TO MANY these moral considerations are distasteful: foreign policy should be determined by a clear appreciation of geo-strategic interests alone. We may indeed have divergent *interests*—which reflect themselves in policy matters in such areas as arms control, energy, North/South questions, Middle East nuances and the like—although these can often, quite wilfully, be overdrawn. However, the fact remains that we in Western Europe have absolutely no means of defending these marginally divergent interests outside the general framework of an Alliance which is still fundamentally led by the United States. The problem is that to take an increasingly "Eurocentric view", and to turn our back upon "Atlanticism", will not lead to a defensible and united Western Europe (this is now impossible) but rather to a disarmed Western Europe at the mercy of increasing Soviet pressures and demands. There must come a point at which we in Western Europe, in developing ever more separate foreign-policy approaches, walk over a threshold—one which the unilateralists wish to push us over—in which we, in any meaningful sense, cease to identify ourselves as part of the Western system.

Although it may sound "alarmist", the great cause for Social Democrats, for the SDP, is nothing less than to keep Britain a part of the Western family of nations. With "de-industrialisation", sharpened class divisions, and the growth of the neutro-pacifist movement, the impulse towards "opting out" is probably stronger here than in any other major West European nation.[13]

IN ATTEMPTING to explain and define ourselves to the wider public, and to those abroad who follow British affairs, one is inevitably drawn back into the old "Left/Right" labels given to political language by the French. This old spectrum is not completely redundant. But where should the SDP fit in? Probably the best way to look at it, bearing in mind the traditions from which those who brought us

[11] *Neither Red nor Dead: The Case for Disarmament* (SDP discussion paper, Open Forum, 1981).

[12] *The Guardian*, 6 September 1981.

[13] A recent public opinion poll in Britain gave 32% in favour of unilateral nuclear disarmament (with a heavy weighting towards unilateralism among the working class). *The Times*, 6 November 1981, p. 14.

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into being belong, is to see us as "right-of-centre" in foreign and defence policy and "left-of-centre" in domestic policy. We need to re-assert, in suitably modern form, that crucial tradition of British politics represented in the 20th century by such figures as Joseph Chamberlain, David Lloyd George, Ernest Bevin, Herbert Morrison, Hugh Gaitskell and George Brown. In other words we need to create that most elusive of British needs—a party of radical reform with mass support among the working people.

But we must be careful what we mean by radicalism. We should not let it lead us into fashionable "progressive" byways. A foreign commentator recently described an SDP meeting as "full of people in tweeds and walking-shoes who oppose blood sports and applaud exuberantly at the announcement that smoking will not be permitted . . . ." There is no harm in any of this, and fortunately it is easily offset by many of the new recruits in Parliament who represent industrial constituencies. Nor should we be tempted by a radical impulse back into the old Fabian ways of rich *v.* poor income-redistribution and excessive planning—all that has failed! In programmes of domestic reconstruction we should be radical, or "left-of-centre", only in the sense that we seek to *modernise* our society in some of the ways suggested earlier. Without such a hopeful prospect of a new transformation, the collective resentments and prejudices which are deeply embedded in our society will simply proliferate to the point where they become unmanageable.

AT THE CONCLUSION OF a masterly survey of how British cultural attitudes have in the past limited economic growth, an American historian suggests that "modernisation" may simply be "un-English."[14] C. P. Snow, in a warning to his fellow-members of the British governing class once likened them to the leaders of the Venetian Republic in its last half-century:

> "They knew, just as clearly as we know, that the current of history had begun to flow against them. Many of them gave their minds to working out ways to keep going. It would mean breaking the pattern into which they had crystallised. They were fond of the pattern, just as we are fond of ours. They never found the will to break it. . . ."

Social Democrats must be prepared to "break the pattern" so that it cannot be said of us, as it was said of the leaders of 17th-century Spain:

> ". . . they lacked the breadth of vision and the strength of character to break with a past that could no longer serve as a reliable guide to the future . . . At a time when the face of Europe was altering more rapidly than ever before, the country that had once been its leading power proved to be lacking the essential ingredient for survival—the willingness to change."[16]

[14] Martin J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (1981), p. 161.
[15] J. H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (1963), p. 378.

Wise Boswell

"I should live no more than I can record"
In any year there will be the last words
And the husks and the fire set
By temperate rhythms that do not burn.
"One should not have more corn growing"
The verges cleared by the last sparrows
The threaded nests that block the spouting
A source of richness and rich activity
Fit for poems "than one can get in."

Elizabeth Smither

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André Gide's Return

A Case-Study in Left-Bank Politics

By HERBERT R. LOTTMAN

"... truth, however painful, only wounds in order to cure."

ANDRÉ GIDE (*1936*)

IN THE PERIOD between the two World Wars, André Gide was probably the best-known representative of French literature at home or abroad. He had been a published writer since 1911, with two dozen books or more in print, and although many of them propounded aesthetics which could only be described as introspective, he was doing what he could to remain in touch with the youngest and most avant-garde of his readers. In his early work he had seemed the image of traditional French Protestantism, austere and unbending, but his themes soon expanded to embrace the most sensuous of hedonisms, and he was an early advocate of a very literary homosexuality. He was known to inhabit a cultivated, somewhat bookish environment while at the same time reaching out to other cultures and literatures. When he finally admitted social concerns to his writing table, it was as if he had begun a second career. But even after his travels in French Africa and his subsequent condemnation of "colonialism", the image of dilettantism persisted.

> "As a destroyer, Gide pierces upper-class ideologies with a spear [a critic noted in Henri Barbusse's pro-Communist newspaper *Monde* in 1929]. But after that he washes his hands, abstains from action, offering us nothing but further reasons for concern."

Soon his critics on the Left stopped criticising. In the July 1932 issue of *La Nouvelle Revue Française* Gide offered a section of his private journal up to public scrutiny. "But above all I should like to live long enough to see the plans of Russia succeed", he had written. "All my heart applauds this gigantic and still so human enterprise." In September of that year another section of his journal was published. "I should like to cry out my sympathy for the USSR; and I should like my cry to be heard." (These journal entries had been written in 1931.) Then the *NRF* published, from Gide's journal of April 1932, this confidence: "If my life were necessary to assure the success of the USSR, I

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should sacrifice it at once." It was the year of his 63rd birthday.

Considering Gide's reputation, his position in the literary establishment, these declarations were newsworthy, and the press did not fail to pick them up, although the conversion was treated with sarcasm by those who took it for passing fashion. But the Communist paper *L'Humanité* saw Gide's confessions as "typical of the attraction which the magnificent Soviet experiment exercises, even on bourgeois intellectuals." Ilya Ehrenburg reported the news to his Soviet readers with even greater enthusiasm:

> "There is no need to speak here of the courage of André Gide—all his past life frees us of the need for such praise. Paul Claudel ended up in the Church, Paul Valéry in the French Academy, André Gide in life."

With his declaration of love for Soviet Communism, Gide was to be drawn into history. Soon after the first sensational pages of his journal appeared in print, he was asked to endorse a World Congress Against War which Henri Barbusse and Romain Rolland were promoting. This meeting, to become known as the Amsterdam Congress, was the first large-scale international rally of its kind. Gide also accepted the chairmanship of a meeting called to denounce Hitlerism in March 1933, sponsored by the "Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists", in the company of André Malraux, Jean Guéhenno and Paul Vaillant-Couturier. There Gide stated that even if the USSR *also* restricts freedom, it was "to make it possible at long last to establish a new society."

ONE HAS TO READ the complete published *Journal* of Gide to understand the basic ambiguities of his position. The writer who revealed anti-Semitism in his remarks on his *lycée classmate Léon Blum, who* had at one time sympathised with Charles Maurras and *Action Française*, and who was still attracted by the personality of Adolf Hitler, confessed to his journal: "I don't understand anything about politics. If it interests me, it is in the manner of a Balzac novel." He refused to put his name to political manifestos and petitions, he wrote, not to set himself apart, "but I don't believe that I have encountered a single proclamation of this kind the contents of which I could approve entirely, and which did not distort my position on some point."

Yet despite himself he now belonged to a cause. He was even becoming a familiar name to those who would never read a line of his work. The *NRF* critic Ramon Fernandez recounted that on 12 February 1934, during the General Strike following the portentous right-wing rioting of 6 February, a construction worker was heard to exclaim: "What we need is rifles, to march into the rich neighbourhoods. They're the only places that serious things can be done. And then we need someone to lead us, a chief, a real man . . . say a guy like Gide." Fernandez was accordingly impressed with "the mythical power of literature", but he could also have spoken of the power of the Communist press.

Only a month before the February 6 riots Gide had accompanied André Malraux into the dragon's lair, to Hitler's capital, in an attempt to persuade Nazi Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to release Georgi Dimitrov and his fellow defendants who had been acquitted of the charge of setting fire to the *Reichstag*, but not yet freed. Goebbels did not receive them, but Gide and Malraux left their request on his desk; and the Dimitrov group was out of jail by the end of February. In March 1934 Gide affirmed in a letter to a journalist the "right of inspection" that every man possessed concerning his neighbour, thanks to which international justice was taking precedence over local versions easier to manipulate. "Thanks to this right, to the pressure of inspection, the *Reichstag* trial acquitted the innocent; thanks to it the defendants were released at last." By then Gide was an expected presence on the speakers' platforms at meetings, and a name—despite himself—at the bottom of petitions. He confessed at a debate on his work at the *Union pour la Vérité* in January 1935: "Since I became involved in political concerns four years ago, I have stopped writing."

TO REACH the Gide apartment one had only to cross the Boulevard Saint-Germain from the Malraux' Rue du Bac, taking a second or third right turn to the Rue Vaneau; on his way to the Gallimard offices, Gide constantly passed the Malraux' door. Even a slow walker could bridge the distance in ten minutes, and Gide and Malraux exchanged visits often in those years.

In the mid-1930s, apart from the Halévy "at homes", Gide's was probably the most traditional literary salon that writers of the youngest generation could attend. Gide's biographer, the faithful Maria Van Rysselberghe, who was at once his unofficial hostess, confidante, and the mother of the woman with whom he had a child out of wedlock, had an apartment of her own next door to Gide's, on the top floor of that solid middle-class building at 1 bis, Rue Vaneau. She considered her neighbour's apartment a "crossroads"; it seemed to her that everyone who had a problem, everyone who was about to set forth on a journey, or who was returning from one, felt it necessary to call in there. The visitors she registers in her extraordinary diary quite make up a who's who of literary and intellectual Paris.

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FROM THE MOMENT André Gide declared himself a *communiste de coeur*, an admirer and a voluntary defender of the workers' homeland, he made himself available to the Soviet cause, refusing no petition, meeting, movement. Having been born in 1869, Gide was the senior member of most speakers' platforms, most sponsoring boards. His books, his influence, were more of a drawing card among the discerning than the works of those fading glories, Romain Rolland and Henri Barbusse. Gide was not robust, and his well-known aversion to draughty conference halls generated anecdotes. But the Communists were pleased with Gide's performance, and maintained a constant liaison with him via Paul Vaillant-Couturier and Ilya Ehrenburg, or indirectly through a network of fellow travellers or *compagnons de route*.

It was the decade of pilgrimages to the Soviet Union. Gide had been planning such a journey for years. In 1933, for example, he had tried to tempt his friend Roger Martin du Gard to accompany him, but du Gard was evasive, finally immovable. Gide himself found reasons to postpone, to cancel: his colds (and Moscow's draughts) as well as the fear expressed to Maria Van Rysselberghe that he would be obliged to make speeches, would find himself saying more than he wished, while the translation into Russian and back into French for home consumption would make it worse, "and all the effort that I am making to keep my personal point of view in Communism will be lost. . . ." That was in October 1935. Ilya Ehrenburg pointed out to André Malraux that health wasn't everything, that Gide had a duty to the Party but also to the political crisis: at the time it was considered vital to consolidate the Franco-Soviet alliance that had been made formal in the pact between the two nations in May 1935. Gide wondered to what extent it was in Ehrenburg's personal interest to see that he went to Moscow. Then Gide's friend Pierre Herbart, who was to become the husband of Elisabeth (daughter of Maria Van Rysselberghe and mother of Gide's child), left for Moscow to work as an editor on the French edition of *International Literature*. Elisabeth joined him there early in 1936.

A Telegram to Stalin

STALIN'S EFFIGY *is met with everywhere; his name is on every tongue; his praises are invariably sung in every speech. In Georgia particularly, I did not enter a single inhabited room, even the humblest and the most sordid, without remarking a portrait of Stalin hanging on the wall, in the same place no doubt where the ikon used to be. Is it adoration, love or fear? I do not know; always and everywhere he is present.*

ON THE ROAD *from Tiflis to Batum, we passed through Gori, the small town where Stalin was born. I thought that it would no doubt be courteous to send him a message, in response to the welcome given us by the Soviet Union, where we had everywhere been acclaimed, feasted, and made much of. I should never, I thought, find a better opportunity. I stopped the car in front of the post-office and handed in the text of the telegram. This is almost exactly what I had written:*

> *"Passing through Gori, in the course of our wonderful journey, I feel the need to send you my most cordial . . ."*

But here the translator paused: "I cannot let you speak like this. 'You' is not enough when that 'you' is Stalin. It would be positively shocking; something must be added." And, as I displayed some amazement, they began to consult among themselves. They proposed: **"You, leader of the workers,"** *or* **"You, master of the peoples,"** *or . . . I can't remember what.*

It sounds as though I was making it up, doesn't it? Alas, I am not! And people had better not try to say that we had to do with some stupid and clumsily zealous subordinates. No, we had with us, taking part in the discussion, several personages who were quite sufficiently highly placed and, at any rate, quite familiar with "what is done."

I said it was absurd, protested that Stalin was above such base flattery. I struggled in vain. There was nothing to be done. My telegram would only be accepted if I consented to the addition. And as it concerned a translation that I could not control, I gave up the struggle and submitted, but declined all responsibility, reflecting with sadness that all this sort of thing helps to widen between Stalin and the people an appalling, an unbridgeable gulf.

I had already noticed that other translations of various speeches that I had occasion to make in the U.S.S.R. had been similarly touched up and "improved." X explained to me that, according to correct usage, the word "destiny" should be followed by a laudatory epithet when it is the destiny of the U.S.S.R. that is being referred to. I finally proposed "glorious", which X told me would satisfy everybody. On the other hand he asked me to be good enough to suppress the word "great" that I had put in front of "monarch." A monarch cannot be great. I at once declared that I would not recognise as mine any text by me that might be published in Russian during my stay, and that I should say so. I have now said it.

André Gide
Retour de l'URSS (1936)

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GIDE'S DECISION was taken in May. First he had another talk with Malraux, and with Ehrenburg, concerning what he would be able to say in the USSR and how his words would be treated. He wanted to talk about the plight of Soviet homosexuals, for instance—would he be listened to? He could choose his own travelling companions, at any rate. The first was his editor, Jacques Schiffrin, publisher of Gallimard's *Pléiade* library. Schiffrin was a keenly intelligent man of the Left who was not a Communist and who possessed an irreplaceable asset: he was a native Russian speaker. Born in 1894 in Baku on the Caspian Sea, Schiffrin had been a student in Switzerland during the Russian Revolution. He settled in France, where he created the *Pléiade* series, and remained as its director when it merged with Gallimard. Gide also invited Eugène Dabit, Louis Guilloux, and Jef Last, then 38, described by Gide's confidante as "a Dutch sailor, writer, winning, delicious, ironic, speaking *un français impossible*" (Last was to take part in the Spanish Civil War and in the Dutch resistance during the Nazi occupation).

So Louis Aragon informed Moscow that Gide was finally on his way, and with Schiffren as his interpreter. A telegram came back: Pierre Herbart was flying to Paris that very night to speak to Gide privately. For the Soviet hosts were evidently upset that Schiffrin was going to interpret for Gide. That seemed like a lack of confidence on Gide's part (although Herbart had tried to pacify the Soviets by pointing out that Schiffrin was just a friend). Gide phoned Aragon and told him the whole thing was stupid: to reject Schiffrin, now that everyone knew he was going, would have a deplorable effect. In any case, Schiffrin and his other travelling companions were scheduled to arrive a week after Gide himself, and none of them would accompany Gide to official receptions. Aragon said that he would try to settle the problem. Maria Van Rysselberghe observed that Herbart was evasive, reticent about speaking of his experiences in Moscow. He was heard to comment on the lack of freedom of artists and writers there: "We must utilise Moscow as an experiment, not as an example."

Herbart also revealed that the Soviet Union had printed 300,000 postcards with Gide's picture on them. "Then everyone is going to recognise me", a worried Gide remarked, "*Mais tout le monde va me reconnaître, alors!*" The Soviet *International Literature* published an issue largely concerned with Gide. The University of Moscow opened an exhibition devoted to his life and works.

As Gide packed, the news of Maxim Gorky's illness became more alarming; clearly the old writer was dying. But if it was only to go to the funeral, thought Gide, better not to go at all. Ehrenburg reported that Gorky was getting better. So off went Gide and Herbart on 16 June 1936, flying from Le Bourget airport in a German airplane (there would be a stop-over in Berlin). Schiffrin, Dabit, Guilloux, and Last sailed to Leningrad.

GIDE ARRIVED IN Moscow with the best of intentions. His own diary expresses his state of mind: if he had once believed that man had to change himself first of all, now he was convinced that social conditions had to change before man could. Dishonest attacks on the Soviet Union had led him to wish to defend "the experiment"; he felt that the critics would begin to support the Soviet Union when he ceased to do so. He hoped that he would be able to keep his own attention focused on final goals, so that he would not be led to turn away from the USSR.

Certainly he had been shaken by the growing body of well-motivated criticism of the Soviet system. Before he left, Victor Serge, the man whose liberation from Soviet exile Gide had endorsed following the International Writers Congress just a year earlier, published an open letter to Gide in *Esprit*. How can we fight Fascism, Serge asked, if we have our own concentration camps? "Let me tell you that we can serve the working class and the USSR only with total lucidity." Herbart privately confirmed the truth of everything Serge said, but found it inadmissible for a Communist to declare such things publicly. Gide agreed. "Ah! But I should like to be able to tell Stalin everything I think about that. . . ."

Gide arrived too late to see Gorky alive. He paid his respects to him at his deathbed, and that evening attended a performance of Gorky's *Mother* before the rest of the audience was even aware that its author had died; an actor stepped to the front of the stage to announce it. The following day, Gide stood alongside the coffin with Herbart and Louis Aragon (who was spending the summer in the Soviet Union). Gide delivered a speech in Gorky's memory on Red Square, then joined Soviet writers in the funeral procession. "The fate of culture is linked in our minds to the destiny of the USSR", he declared. "We shall defend it." But he could not resist returning to the theme that mattered so much to him: the individuality to which a creative person had a right, as well as a need.

> "I have often written that it is in being the most particular that a writer achieves the most general interest, because it is in showing the most personal side of himself that he reveals himself, by that very fact, the most humane."

He observed that "no Russian writer was more Russian than Maxim Gorky." But he also said that while writers have always written against their régimes, for the first time, in the Soviet Union, the writer need not be in opposition.

Everywhere he went he was treated with

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deference. When he visited the Gide exhibition at the university, he talked to students assembled there. In Leningrad, where he had gone to meet Schiffrin and the other members of his party who had travelled by ship, he was also asked to speak, but there he experienced the heavy hand of the censor. He was asked to insert the word "*glorious*" in the phrase "the future of the USSR" (and to remove *great* before *monarch*). While the group visited the Crimean port of Sevastopol, Eugène Dabit fell ill, apparently stricken by typhus. The others returned to Moscow and Dabit died alone in Sevastopol on 21 August, a month before his thirty-eighth birthday. (The final entry in his private diary was a cry of pessimism, for he saw the coming of another World War. "We are hunted, we are lost. Life, in this world, becomes unthinkable.") On his return to Paris, Gide accompanied Clara Malraux to the funeral at Père Lachaise cemetery, where Vaillant-Couturier and Aragon made speeches stressing Dabit's sympathy with Communism, Aragon referring to the dead man's expressions of moral satisfaction with the Soviet Union. "*Hélas!*" was Gide's comment to his diary.

Although he was giving out hints, Gide had not yet delivered himself of his sentiments concerning the workers' paradise. Yet it was his practice to write about everything he did, saw, or thought about, and to publish what he wrote. There was also a tradition of writing about one's travels in the Soviet Union; by 1936 one could have filled a shelf with such accounts. Gide began writing his *Retour de l'URSS* almost immediately after Dabit's funeral. In private conversations he made it clear that the Soviet government's severity with respect to homosexuality was only one of his objections to the régime. He was pleased, he told Maria Van Rysselberghe, that he had not seen Stalin, and had not even corresponded with him about the repressive legislation against homosexuals; there was now so much more to be said about the Soviet system than that. Certainly his Soviet hosts had done

On Being

BEFORE GOING *to the Soviet Union, I wrote the following passage:*

"I believe that a writer's value is intimately linked to the force of the revolutionary spirit that animates him—or to be more exact (for I am not so mad as to believe that only left-wing writers have artistic value), to the force of his spirit of opposition. This spirit exists as much in Bossuet and Chateaubriand, or at the present time in Claudel, as in Molière, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, and so many others. In our form of society, a great writer, a great artist, is essentially nonconformist. He makes head against the current. This was true of Dante, of Cervantes, of Ibsen, of Gogol"....

WHAT IS WANTED NOW *is compliance, conformism. What is desired and demanded is approval of all that is done in the U.S.S.R.; and an attempt is being made to obtain an approval that is not mere resignation, but a sincere, an enthusiastic approval. What is most astounding is that this attempt is successful. On the other hand the smallest protest, the least criticism, is liable to the severest penalties, and in fact is immediately stifled. And I doubt whether in any other country in the world, even Hitler's Germany, thought be less free, more bowed down, more fearful (terrorised), more vassalised.*

IF THE MIND *is obliged to obey a word of command, it can at any rate feel that it is not free. But if it has been so manipulated beforehand that it obeys without even waiting for the word of command, it loses even the consciousness of its enslavement. I believe many young Soviet citizens would be greatly astonished if they were told that they had no liberty of thought, and would vehemently deny it.*

And as it always happens that we recognise the value of certain advantages only after we have lost them, there is nothing like a stay in the U.S.S.R. (or of course in Germany) to help us appreciate the inappreciable liberty of thought we still enjoy in France—and sometimes abuse.

AT LENINGRAD I WAS ASKED *to prepare a little speech to be addressed to a meeting of writers and students. I had only been a week in the country and was trying to tune in to the correct key. I therefore submitted my text to* **X** *and* **Y**. *I was at once given to understand that my text was far from being in the right key or the right tone, and that what I was intending to say would be most unsuitable. Oh! it didn't take me long to realise this by myself. As for the speech, it was never delivered. Here it is.*

"I have often been asked my opinion of present-day Soviet literature. I should like to explain why I have always refused to give it. I shall be able at the same time to repeat with greater precision one of the passages of the speech I made in the Red Square on the solemn occasion of Gorki's funeral. I was speaking of the 'new problems' which had been raised by the very triumph of the Soviet Republics, problems, I said, which it would not be the least of the U.S.S.R.'s glories to have introduced into history and to have presented to our meditations. As the future of culture

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everything conceivable to satisfy his needs. Gide confided to Roger Stéphane that they had filled a swimming pool with handsome young men—whom he later discovered were Red Army soldiers. (After the bombshell of Gide's book, the Soviets called attention to a homosexual act he had committed during his trip; apparently Gide had not realised that this encounter had also been pre-arranged.)

Maria Van Rysselberghe describes the evening—23 September, 1936—when Gide read the first draft of *Retour de l'URSS* to Jacques Schiffrin and Louis Guilloux. Presumably he had already read it to Jef Last, for Last stayed at the Rue Vaneau apartment before going off to Spain. The friends found Gide's report clear but harsh. "This little book will have the effect of an exploding bomb", Maria Van Rysselberghe observed with her habitual perspicuity. "You have to have a lot of courage to publish such a book", Guilloux commented. (In his own journal, he shows himself to be less sympathetic to Gide: "I'm beginning to believe that he went to the USSR only to obtain the authority he needed to say what he is saying today.") Gide went to the South of France to show his draft to Herbart, obtaining useful suggestions for the final manuscript. By 21 October it was at the printer's.

GIDE WANTED to save the surprise of his conclusions for publication day. But he also thought that he had better warn his friends. He began with Communists like Paul Nizan. By 24 October *Le Figaro* reported in a gossip column the "rumour" that Gide had returned from the Soviet Union troubled and disappointed. He was said to be preparing a small book for publication before the middle of November; and it might surprise. Meanwhile Gide had gone out to Versailles to talk to André Chamson, by then curator of the palace, asking whether *Vendredi* would publish his findings. How could Chamson refuse?

"Forced to Think"

seems to me to be closely bound up with their solution, it will perhaps not be amiss if I return to the subject with greater particularity.

"THE GREAT MAJORITY, even when composed of the best individuals, never bestows its approbation on what is new, potential, unconcerted, and disconcerting in a work, but only on what it can *recognise*—that is to say, the commonplace. Just as once there were bourgeois commonplaces, so now there are revolutionary commonplaces; it is important to know it. It is important to realise that the essential value of a work of art, the quality that will ensure its survival, never lies in a conformist adherence to a doctrine, be that doctrine the soundest and the surest possible; but rather in formulating questions that forestall the future's, and answers to questions that have not yet been formulated. I am very much afraid that many works, imbued with the purest spirit of Marxism, and on that account so successful today, will soon emit to the noses of tomorrow the insufferable odour of the clinic; and I believe that the works that will live most victoriously will be those that have freed themselves successfully from such preoccupations.

"When the revolution is triumphant, installed, and established, art runs a terrible danger, a danger almost as great as under the worst fascist oppression—the danger of orthodoxy. Art that submits to orthodoxy, to even the soundest doctrines, is lost—wrecked upon the shoals of conformism. What the triumphant revolution can and should offer the artist is above all else liberty. Without liberty art loses its meaning and its value.

"Walt Whitman, on the death of President Lincoln, wrote one of his most beautiful poems. But if this poem had been imposed, if Whitman had been forced to write it by order and in conformity with an accepted canon, his threnody would have lost all its virtue and its beauty; or rather, Whitman could not have written it.

"And as, quite naturally, the assent of the greatest number, with its accompanying applause, success, and favours, goes to the qualities the public is best able to recognise—that is say, to conformism—I wonder with some anxiety whether perhaps in this great Soviet Union there may not be vegetating obscurely, unknown to the crowd, some Baudelaire, some Keats, or some Rimbaud, who by very reason of his worth cannot make himself heard. And yet he, of all others, is the one who is of importance, for those who are at first disdained, like Rimbaud, Keats, Baudelaire, and even Stendhal, are those who tomorrow will be the greatest."

But, they will say, what concern have we today with a possible Keats, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, or even Stendhal? The only value they have in our eyes now is the degree in which they reflect the moribund and corrupt society of which they were the melancholy products. If the new society of today is unable to produce them, so much the worse for them, but so much the better for us, who have nothing more to learn from them or their like. The writer who can be of service to us today is the man who is perfectly at his ease in this new form of society and whose spirit is intensified by what would have hampered the others. In other words, the man who approves, enjoys, and applauds.

Exactly. And I think that the writings of those applauders are of very slight value or service, and that if the people wish to develop their culture, they had far better not listen to them. Nothing is so useful for developing culture as to be forced to think.

A.G.

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One of the anecdotes Gide told his friends—Chamson and Guéhenno both remembered and recorded it—was how, during his travels across the Soviet territories, he and his companions were always greeted at train stops by banners of welcome; only later did they realise that the banners were travelling on the same train with them.

Now the pressures began to be felt. On 26 October, Ilya Ehrenburg called in at the Rue Vaneau. To Gide's surprise, he seemed fully aware of the contents of the unpublished book. Ehrenburg let Gide know that he even approved Gide's point of view, and in fact he himself could have said much more! But was this the right time, with the Spanish Civil War raging, and the Soviet Union doing so much to help the Republican cause? Shouldn't Gide himself go to Spain? Gide liked that idea, for it suggested a means to prove that he was not breaking with the Communists. Meanwhile, Gide was getting telegrams from the Spanish war front warning that the book would represent "a mortal blow" for their cause.

Jef Last cabled from Spain, for example, begging that he at least postpone publication of *Retour* until they could talk in Madrid (Ehrenburg certainly put him up to that). Aragon telephoned to say that he was back from Spain with a message from Last: the Dutchman had given Gide *une lettre d'approbation* which was to have been printed at the end of the book; now that letter would have to be omitted. (Clearly Last had been identified as Gide's weakness.) Malraux also returned from Spain, and asked to dine with Gide who feared that this was to be another move in the campaign. But Malraux remained his old independent self. "They are bothering you a lot, aren't they? Don't let yourself be had." But when Gide met Victor Serge, Serge wondered what Malraux's attitude would be if he were asked to choose for or against Gide. Gide said that Ehrenburg had obviously seen the text of his book, even though the printer had been asked to keep it confidential, to which Serge replied that Ehrenburg was a Soviet secret agent, or an aide of secret agents. For his part Gide had asked Magdeleine Paz to be sure that his meeting with Serge remained confidential so that no one could accuse him of having been influenced by Serge. "Try not to be followed", she had warned Serge.

GIDE CONTINUED to make minor changes in his book, and before Schiffrin arrived to take the final proofs to the printer, he added a phrase at the very end, offering hope that Soviet aid to Republican Spain would represent a change in the Soviet system. When Gide's preface was published in *Vendredi*, Aragon phoned to say: "I am saddened not so much because of the probable reaction of our enemies but of that of our friends."

Even the faithful Herbart, who agreed with Gide's findings but not with his conclusions (Herbart was a member of the French Communist Party), now intervened. Gide was getting ready to accompany a delegation of French personalities representing Left and Right, Catholics and Communists, to Spain, in an attempt to end the fighting. Herbart suggested that Gide would have more influence in Spain if his book did not appear before the trip. Gide finally agreed to a week's postponement. But the planned delegation never left Paris.

RETOUR DE L'URSS was published on 5 November, 1936, dedicated to Eugène Dabit (as "reflections of what I lived and thought alongside him, with him"). In the preface, which Chamson published in *Vendredi*, Gide explained that he had declared his admiration for the Soviet Union three years earlier, that as recently as this past March *La Nouvelle Revue Française* had published his further expressions of sympathy. But now he had to recognise his error. Was it he who had changed, or the USSR? In either case humanity seemed more important to him than even the Soviet Union; it was for that nation's sake that he was criticising it now. He regretted that their common enemies would make use of his remarks, but he would not have written them if he had not felt that the USSR would eventually overcome its errors.

The body of the book—only 73 pages long if preface and appendices are subtracted—opened with a glimpse of the idyllic side of his journey: the friendly people, the natural beauty, the rest-homes . . . . But then there is the shock of coming upon long lines of consumers waiting their turn to purchase merchandise of inferior quality. Even the Persian saying (he quotes it in English): "*Women for duty, boys for pleasure, melons for delight*", did not quite apply there, for the melons were bad. He observed the indolence of workers, and doubted official statistics concerning collective farm life. Everywhere he saw conformity, accompanied by boasts about how much better things were "under socialism." But he could see the slums and the poorly-fed population behind the models; he discovered a genuine lower class. In the Soviet Union he felt that it was, ironically, the revolutionary spirit that was considered counter-revolutionary. He doubted that in any other country, including Nazi Germany, thought was less free, more afraid. He described how his own public statements were censored, told of the extra praise of Stalin that his translator insisted on inserting into his telegram of greetings to the Soviet dictator. Stalin's personal rule, he went on, was contrary to Communist principles. He had seen how art was subordinated to the state; in passing (in a footnote),

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he attacked the legislation against abortion and homosexuality.

GIDE'S LITTLE BOOK was reprinted eight times between publication day and September 1937, a total of 146,300 copies. Overnight it was a sensation in the press, evoking reactions of happy surprise from the Right (although in *L'Action Française* Thierry Maulnier regretted that the criticism of Soviet life was carried out "in the name of an inane egalitarianism . . . an anarchistic individualism . . ."). In time Gide was to disavow the applause he received from conservatives. Leon Trotsky praised Gide for his intellectual honesty, contrasting him with Malraux, who (said Trotsky) was "organically incapable of moral independence." Malraux insisted that everything else be forgotten because of Spain. "His interest in the Spanish revolution", argued Trotsky, "still doesn't prevent Stalin from exterminating veteran revolutionaries."

Needless to say, *Pravda* and *L'Humanité* began denouncing Gide. Romain Rolland wrote a letter to foreign workers employed at the Stalin Steel Factory in Magnitogorsk that was published in *L'Humanité*: "This bad book is also a mediocre book", and more words to that effect.

Gide became a pre-Orwellian unperson. His name disappeared from Communist-controlled publications, from the boards of their organisations. Polemicists were enlisted to denounce him on the floor at meetings of the House of Culture, in the columns of Party organs and fellow-travelling periodicals. Aragon requested that Louis Guilloux, literary editor of *Ce Soir*, write a response to Gide's book. Guilloux replied that he could do no such thing, since he had gone to the USSR on Gide's invitation and in any case had seen little to write about. As we have seen, privately Guilloux had his own misgivings about Gide's exposé, believing that his friend should have departed from the Soviet Union as soon as he realised that he disapproved of it. "Why did he accept gifts until the very end?" And that eulogistic telegram to Stalin . . . .

But Guilloux held firm. Jean-Richard Bloch, co-director with Aragon of *Ce Soir*, also pressed him to disavow Gide. Guilloux confided to his diary that if Bloch insisted, he would reply that he would not do it, and precisely because Bloch and Aragon wished him to. A few days later he was dismissed and replaced by Paul Nizan.

The consequences for Gide were predictable. Jean Guéhenno found him suddenly alone. "The human warmth with which he had felt surrounded for several years, this affection which was perhaps on order, but nevertheless this affection which had borne him for a time, he felt that—again on order—it was being withdrawn . . . ." What hurt Gide (Guéhenno wrote in his diary) "was the silence of his friends of yesterday, the watchword of silence which they were following." Guéhenno was told by one Communist: "We're going to let Gide marinate a while."

Seeing Gide walking on the opposite sidewalk one day, Jean Cassou crossed over to greet him. Gide said, "You dare to shake my hand when everybody else is attacking me?" Cassou, concerned above all about Spain (and he believed the Soviet Union was the only country which was helping Spain), replied, "If I have any reproach, it's that you put yourself above everything else . . . ." By that he meant that Gide cared more about his own conscience than about their cause. Gide smiled, they shook hands and parted.

ON A JOURNEY to Spain in connection with the plan for a peace delegation, Pierre Herbart had taken a set of proofs of *Retour de l'URSS*. He showed it to André Malraux and to Gustav Regler, but also to Mikhail Koltzov.[1] While Herbart was still in Spain, Gide's book appeared in bookstore windows in Paris, and the uproar began. In Spain, deviationists who were saying (or doing) less than Gide were being arrested and summarily executed by Soviet agents, or by Spaniards commanded by Soviet officers; and Herbart felt himself in danger. He slipped away to see Malraux, then made his way back to France. Later, when Jef Last arrived from Spain, he had to see Gide secretly, for he felt he was being followed by his Communist comrades, who considered it a crime to associate with Gide.

THE INTERNATIONAL WRITERS CONGRESS had shifted to Madrid for its meetings. Delegates were assigned to a hotel near the university campus, close to the battle lines (Robert Brasillach was observing from the other side). Each evening at the dinner hour, the Franco forces began firing their cannons; inside the dining-hall Congress delegates stood up and sang: "*Madrid que bien résistes*", based on a song by Federico García Lorca (who had been killed by the Fascists the previous year). As Ilya Ehrenburg contended, the barrage by Franco forces against the Madrid sessions of the Writers Congress was deliberate.

During the Congress, a telegram arrived reporting a Republican victory on the Madrid front, and there was a proposal to make General José Miaja, who was in charge of the defence of Madrid, honorary chairman of the Congress. When André

[1] Mikhail Koltzov was a Soviet press correspondent and a *GPU* agent in Spain. There is a fictional portrait of him in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He was liquidated by Stalin on his return to the USSR.—ED. NOTE.

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Malraux spoke, it was to describe his fund-raising campaign for the Spanish cause in the United States and Canada, and in a Hollywood film studio where, he recalled, Ernst Lubitsch was directing Marlene Dietrich in a movie.

The delegates returned on 10 July to Valencia, where one of the speakers was André Chamson. "For my part", he said, "I should like to have the strength to take home so striking a message, which says that tomorrow in all the cities of the world that are secure, in Paris, in London, in New York, at the dawn of each new day, at the hour when the air raids begin in Madrid, there is no man and no woman who fails to feel anguish . . . ."

The International Writers Congress held a final session in Paris with Heinrich Mann and Louis Aragon as chairmen on successive evenings. This time André Gide was not on the platform, having been denounced in Spain, by José Bergamin and Mikhail Koltzov. Now, in Paris, Aragon attacked him again (although this time there were protests from the audience). For Gide had committed the sin of writing frankly about what he observed in the Soviet Union; the controversy about his little book was raging.

SOON GIDE began to put together the information and reflections he had left out of *Retour*, additional facts and ideas others were bringing to him, in a second small book, *Retouches à mon Retour de l'URSS*. Gide offered the new work as his answer to those who had criticised the first book

From André Gide's Diary (1937)

IN MARX'S *writings I stifle. There is something lacking, some ozone or other that is essential to keep my mind breathing. Yet I have read the volumes of "Das Kapital", patiently, assiduously, studiously; plus, from end to end, the volume of extracts very well chosen by Paul Nizan, Engels, the "Anti-Dühring". Plus a number of writings inspired by and on the subject of Marxism. I have read all this with more constancy and care than I brought to any other study; and more effort too; with no other desire than to let myself be convinced, to yield even, and to learn. And each time I came away aching all over, my intelligence bruised as by instruments of torture. I went about repeating to myself: you must. But today I think that what especially bothers me here is the very theory, with everything, if not exactly irrational, at least artificial (I was about to say artful), fallacious, and inhuman it contains.*

I THINK THAT *a great part of Marx's prestige comes from the fact that he is difficult of access, so that Marxism involves an initiation and is generally known only through mediators. It is the mass in Latin. When one does not understand, one bows down. Throughout all of Marx's writings (with perhaps the sole exception of the "Communist Manifesto"—and even there . . .), his thought remains scattered, diffuse, in a nebulous state; never does it coalesce or achieve density. Aside from the two famous slogans: "Proletarians, unite", and "It is not a question of understanding the world, but of changing it" (wonderful formula), one cannot manage, from page to page and chapter to chapter, to find a sentence that stands out and isolates itself from a confused magma. And the happy reception of Marxism comes likewise from the fact that not letting itself be gripped by any such projection, its enormous mass escapes seizure, and attack, too nebulous to crumble and weather. Blows simply sink in and never seem to carry.*

I CARE VERY LITTLE *whether or not my writings conform to Marxism. That "fear of the Index" that I used to express in the past, the absurd fear of being found in error by the pure Communists, bothered me greatly and at length, to such a degree that I no longer dared write. What I am saying will seem very childish. But I don't care. I am not interested in showing myself off to advantage, and I believe that I am most inclined to set forth my weaknesses. But now I am free of that sterilising fear. And that fear has taught me a great deal; yes, much more than Marxism itself. The discipline I imposed on myself for three years has not been without advantage; but today I find greater advantage in liberating myself from it than in continuing to adhere to it. That plunge into Marxism allowed me to see the essential thing it lacked.*

Did it require the failure of the U.S.S.R. to lead me to think thus? It is but the illustration of my blighted hope. And one first tries to tell oneself: it failed through infidelity. Then one again hears ring out the sinister words: "There has not been a revolution that has not, in the long run, strengthened the State . . . ." (Lenin).

OH, HOW RIGHT *you were to see in my coming to Communism a matter of sentiment! But how wrong you were not to understand that I was right! According to you, the only communism that matters is the one that is reached through theory. You speak as theoreticians. To be sure, theory is useful. But without warmth of heart and without love it bruises the very ones it claims to save. Let us beware of those who want to apply Communism coldly, of those who want, at whatever cost, to plough straight furrows on a curving field, of those who prefer to each man the idea they have formed of humanity.*

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in good faith. Paul Nizan had reproached him for seeing the USSR as a country that no longer changed; on the contrary, Gide felt that it was changing from month to month, and for the worse. He drew a parallel between the attacks on *Retour* and the reactions to his earlier books on French colonial territories. Those who visited the Soviet Union with a guide, he argued, were like the "accompanied" travellers in French Equatorial Africa. He confessed that only after completing *Retour de l'URSS* had he read Leon Trotsky and Victor Serge. He confirmed that Eugène Dabit had shared his disappointment with the Soviet Union, something which Soviet apologists had contested. Indeed, he said, he had purposely softened the blows in the first book.

Gide even aggravated his crime. He joined Georges Duhamel, Roger Martin du Gard, François Mauriac, and Paul Rivet in sending a telegram to the Spanish Republican government, asking that its "political prisoners" be given a fair trial. As it happened, these political prisoners were Left-revolutionary militants of anarchistic and Trotskyist ideology (the harassed "*POUM*-ites" about whom George Orwell was writing). They were all being liquidated by Spanish Republicans on the orders of their Soviet advisers.

The final blow came from his old host, Ilya Ehrenburg, who published a fierce attack in *Izvestia* on those who were defending "the Fascists and provocateurs of *P.O.U.M.*" (the dissident Communist movement). His specific target was Gide: "the new ally of [Franco] and the Black Shirts, *le méchant vieillard . . . . le pleureur de Moscou*", the "wicked old man . . . the Moscow crybaby."

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Campanology

Bells are nothing to enjoy
they break you from a dawdle to
a sweat from seven streets away

or in prattling choirs tell the street
your play will be
Sunday-neat and sad

they lie like iron bars across
the public park ringing
favourite hymns but never singing

or in their peals rush each other
like iron men bringing bedlam
to unsuspecting souls

darlings of respectability they
drag the tired from their beds
and callously deafen hunchbacks

or handheld are the loneliness
of lepers telling nightmares
through shutters or barred doors

bells are nothing to enjoy
it took a war to silence them
and even then they threatened

we knew they were Hitler's column
longing to rattle robot tongues
and bring him home.

Edwin Brock

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George Szirtes

Goya's Chamber of Horrors

"Ya ya Goya (I am Goya)"—ANDREI VOZNESENSKY

1. The Allegory of the Cloth

His waistcoat runs away down his elegant chest.
The colour pools somewhere just below his heart.
It shakes him with its colds and satins.

The tie that breaks from cavities around his neck
Is a waterfall. His eyes are very wet.
He is indisputably unwell.

Somehow appalled and sentimental all at once
He falls into his own puddle which turns out
Deeper, colder, silkier than paint.

2. The Allegory of the Dummy

He is tossed in a blanket
By cheerful bosomy girls.
He accepts this as his own
Allegory of desire.
When they shoot him he blazes
Like an indulgent omen.

3. The Allegory of Singing

He listens to a woman dying
Who, as she dies, insists on singing,
Though her voice is badly cracking
And nobody else is listening.
She is appalled and sentimental.
He himself finds this appalling.

4. Yo lo vi—Two Voices

The enemy about my waist
Tears my children in his haste
Lord preserve me live and chaste
  Fear has a sweet and bitter taste.

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They hung my arm upon the tree,
My testicles were fed to me
Before I perished. They were men.
I would do the same to them.

5. Allegory of the Enigma

Construe this if you will. A donkey ride
In hilly country near La Alameda.
All is gentle, all is sonorous
When suddenly a woman falls. The lady
Strikes her head and is concussed.
The gentleman you see there by her side
Is in fact a cleric. What of that?
It need not portend anything at all.

Another lady, dark and beautiful
Expresses consternation, crying out.
It is quite obvious she fears the worst
But really there is very little cause
For concern. Another gentleman
Admires her eyes and notices her dress
Reveals a shadow somewhat like a bruise.
Perhaps it's simply her time of the moon.
Perhaps this really happened, and that lady
Was dressed in such a way as is described.
What is more real? The one who bears the stigma
Of desire? The hills of Alameda?
That fallen woman? The ass? The memory?
The object of desire to whom is inscribed
Another picture, elsewhere? It is a summery
Day. I am alive, and am pleased
To present you with this bright enigma,
The image of a time. Touch it. It is not yet diseased.

6. The Allegory of The Breakfast

He breaks an egg with a sharp tap of the spoon
(Saturn Devouring his own Children)
Submits a slice of bread to the inquisition
of the fire, wrings the neck of the salt-cellar.
Two old macabres make pigs of themselves
On the walls which are horrendous and black.
He rises from the carnage like Colossus,
He cannot hear the agonising creak
Of the chair leg. He cannot hear the shriek
Of the draught that keeps the fire burning.
He stumps about in one of his black moods.
Ya ya Goya, he says, perfectly serious.

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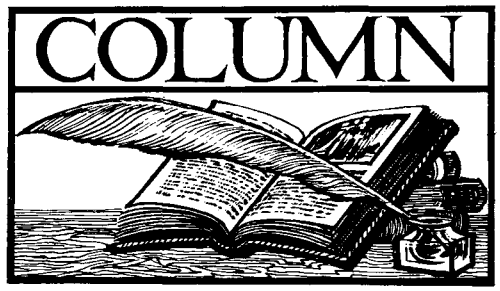

"A LIE", said Mark Twain, "can travel round the world and back again while the truth is lacing up its boots." The British, those po-faced secret poets, made good use of the fact during World War II. Ingenious members of an inter-service committee used to think up lying rumours to spread through Occupied Europe, not only to undermine the Nazis' morale, but also to distort their strategic planning. Stories about Hitler's health, or bearing on the date and place of the D-Day invasion, were tried out for plausibility in select clubs and bars, then planted via agents leaving London. A few such fictions may have ended as "facts" in the history books; and at least one—never, so far as I know, officially sponsored—seems to have turned out to be true. According to General Frank Richardson's recent study, *Mars without Venus*,[1] the Führer's incompletely burned body showed no sign of ever having had a left testicle. Shades of the Army song about "Sergeant Hall."

On target or not, these imaginative tales were known at the time as "sibs", from the Latin *sibilare*, to hiss. The term never fully entered common usage: but it fills a continuing gap in our vocabulary. Lying rumours, smears, false allegations, and bland official mis-statements are as common now as in wartime; and it's often hard to trace them back to their source. Refute one, and another springs up alongside it—so rapidly that denials soon lose credit, like a paper currency on the verge of collapse.

A friend of mine who works for the European Community alleges, only half-jokingly, that an anti-EEC sib factory is in full production "somewhere in Britain." Deep in the West Midlands, in Hull or Bristol or on Clydeside, he pictures an underground map-room in which cunning opponents of British membership, both Labour and Conservative, plot to release a steady trickle of venomous sibs. Passed on by word of mouth from Tory Right-wingers, Marxist shop stewards, troubled housewives, Trotskyite students, siege economists, neutralists, isolationists, National Front supporters protectionist businessmen, pan-European pipe-dreamers, and go-it-alone reactionaries, the stories proliferate at the speed of sound, if not light. No counter-campaign could ever catch up with them. Who would believe a press release against a seductive sib?

It's a tempting theory—although some would no doubt dismiss it as a rival sib. Ever since 1973, when Britain at last joined the European Community, critics of membership have tended to cite minor irritants, not major issues, when presenting their case. Perhaps they sense that the big arguments are conclusively pro-European: the need to bury the hatchet, to prevent a return to 1930s beggar-my-neighbour policies, to maximise Europeans' collective clout in a world of giants, to stabilise central Europe, and to bring more law and order into relations between states. So instead of impugning the Community's objectives—who could oppose common sense and virtue?—they accuse it of interfering with the British way of life. Even ENCOUNTER, seven months ago, published an article urging Britain to ignore the Community's political aims and dilute it into "an unacknowledged but *de facto* Greater EFTA, a European Free Trade Area." In the course of the argument, two persistent sibs re-emerged: first, that Community membership had put an end to Britain's cheap food policy; secondly, that Britain ran a trade deficit with her Community partners. In reality, the cost of deficiency payments and the growing uncertainty of world food markets had led Britain to change her farm policy before she joined the Community; and although in the first years of membership she had a trade deficit within it, this too pre-dated her entry, and after some eighteen months began to shrink. In 1980, it actually became a small surplus. Germany, meanwhile, had replaced the United States as the biggest market for British exports.

These at least are matters of substance. But the same article included two further grievances much more typical of sibs: the size of European Commissioners' pensions, and the salaries and expenses paid to Members of the European Parliament or MEPs. All may seem excessive in a low-wage, low-productivity society like Britain's—although MEPs' salaries are at present pegged on those of national MPs. Even so, this is hardly the calibre of argument that ought to decide serious issues of international policy. And the same applies, in spades, to some of the other irritants that have dogged the debate for the past nine years.

THE FIRST WAS what the late Erle Stanley Gardner might have called *The Case of the Undressed Bird*. Supposed victim: Britain's Christmas turkeys, frequently sold with the giblets in, or "N.Y. [for 'not yet'] dressed." The accused: European health experts, anxious to ban "non-eviscerated" birds. Defending counsel: not Perry Mason, but the Com-

[1] *Mars without Venus*. By FRANK RICHARDSON. William Blackwood, £5.95.

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munity institutions. Although bemused by British willingness to risk salmonella poisoning, they overruled the experts and made sure that Yuletide tradition defeated red tape. Sting in the tail: for years afterwards, Community spokesmen were still having to deny the myth.

It may have been a turkey, but it had all the marks of a good sib. First, there was a remote factual basis: the Community *was* wary of undressed birds and *had* agreed on stricter slaughterhouse rules. Secondly, the suspects were bureaucrats, fussy and over-protective. Thirdly, and most important, they were alleged to be attacking a familiar household god.

And so it went on. Ice cream, honey, district nurses, King Edward potatoes, Bramley apples, lawnmower noise, seed varieties, doorstep deliveries of milk: on all these subjects and many more, the European Community has been falsely accused of petty meddling in British affairs. Every morning now, my Eurocrat friend scans the papers in search of the latest sib. Will fish-and-chips be the next alleged victim, or children's comics, or driving on the left, or warm beer? Will Britain be threatened with continental-style identity cards, Sunday theatres, cafés selling alcohol all day, or tips for cinema usherettes? Even to mention such things may suffice to start a rumour; and running after it shouting "Stop sib!" may simply make matters worse.

THESE THOUGHTS were in my mind a few weeks ago when President Reagan raised a storm with his off-the-cuff remarks about nuclear strategy. It seems clear that he's not Confucius. If metempsychosis worked, he might be thought to be Eisenhower, turning semantic incoherence into diplomatic art. But, to be fair, even Eisenhower's press conferences made better sense than the cold transcript often suggested. As any extempore speaker knows, tone and timing are all-important, and the written record can be a travesty of the event. This places heavy responsibility on reporters. Their exegesis of a tangled statement may need the sensibility of a literary critic and the scruples of a scriptural commentator.

What did Reagan actually say to those newspaper editors way back in October? He was asked whether he thought a nuclear exchange could be limited or whether escalation was inevitable. He answered:

> "I don't honestly know. I think—again—until, some place. . . . All over the world this is being—[there's] research going on, to try and find the defensive weapon. There never has been a weapon that someone hasn't come up with a defence [to]. But it could. . . . And the only defence is: well, you shoot yours, and we'll shoot ours."

The bracketed interpolations are mine, and purely grammatical. As I understand the stops and starts, they seem to be saying:

> "I don't honestly know. Until a defensive weapon, perhaps a perfected ABM, is found, we have to make do with a stand-off. But all over the world there's research going on, to try to find the defensive weapon. There never has been a weapon against which someone hasn't come up with a defence. It could be done: but so far it hasn't, and the only defence is mutual deterrence."

I hope that this doesn't traduce the President's thinking. What I've failed to convey is his hesitation; and that is significant in itself. It derives, I suspect, from his awareness of the complicated paradoxes that underlie what he's saying. First, if either Washington or Moscow alone built a perfect defensive system, deterrence would no longer be mutual. If just the United States did so, Western Europe would feel perilously exposed, and the Soviet Union even more nervous—although with less real reason for fear. If the Soviet Union were the only power to become invulnerable, the whole of the West would be in deadly danger. Only if both sides simultaneously achieved water-tight defensive systems, including Western Europe, could parity and safety be maintained. But that, of course, would change the nature of deterrence. By limiting the risks of a nuclear exchange, it might actually increase the possibility of war.

The President went on:

> "And if you still had that kind of a stalemate, I could see where you could have the exchange of tactical weapons against troops in the field without it bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button."

Asked outright whether there could be a battlefield exchange of "tactical" nuclear weapons without a strategic nuclear exchange, he replied:

> "Well, I would. . . . If they realised that we—again, *if*—if we led them back to that stalemate only because *that*—our retaliatory power, our second-[strike capability], or our strike at them after their first strike—would be so destructive that they couldn't afford it, that would hold them off."

The bracketed interpolation, again, is mine: the transcript has "seconds" in place of "second", so I presume that the President was about to say "second-strike capability", but preferred to spell it out. What the passage means, on my interpretation, is that he was back-tracking. Having sensed that total mutual invulnerability—a water-tight defen-

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sive system on both sides—would preclude a strategic nuclear exchange, alter the nature of deterrence, and make "tactical" nuclear warfare more likely, he became very anxious that his audience should not imagine that this situation had already been reached. So he restated the basic deterrence theory, arguing that the Soviet Union's awareness of American second-strike capability would dissuade it from initiating even a "tactical" nuclear exchange.

Well, you may feel that such hypothesising is more suited to glossing Shakespeare than to grappling with matters of life and megadeath. You may wish that President Reagan spoke like Lincoln rather than Eisenhower. But if this column were an appreciation written for the Kremlin, it might conclude (in suitably guarded language) that the Praesidium had better be extremely careful, since there's no knowing quite how these Americans might react. And, to me, that's rather reassuring. Uncertainty in Moscow, and a nervous Soviet belief in the West's ultimate willingness to go for broke are surely vital elements in keeping the peace.

BUT THAT, OF COURSE, is not the immediate problem. The short-term difficulty lies in Western Europe, and in European reactions to a rather muddled Presidential restatement of very familiar strategic arguments—"mumbling about the unthinkable", as one sour commentator put it.

And this is where Mark Twain's words seem relevant. Three days after President Reagan's statements—which seem to have caused no flurry among his audience—the *Frankfurter Rundschau* carried the now famous front-page dispatch from its Washington correspondent, Horst Schreitter-Schwarzenfeld, under the heading, "NUCLEAR WAR ONLY IN EUROPE? PRESIDENT REAGAN CONSIDERS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE USA COULD BE SPARED." For once, the headline did not "simplify, then exaggerate": its question-mark may have made it a touch more tentative than the article itself.

The rest is history: alarm in Bonn official circles—a clarification from the State Department—accusations of "dangerous madness" from Moscow—and still more grist to the mills of unilateral nuclear disarmament campaigns. For weeks afterwards, current affairs pundits and even BBC comedy programmes were attributing to President Reagan an apparently blithe belief that, yes, a nuclear war might be limited to Europe.

But—forgive me for stating the obvious again—that's not what the man said. He didn't actually mention "Europe" at all. He thought that a "tactical" nuclear exchange might not necessarily involve full escalation: would anyone prefer that it did? He expressed the hope that strategic deterrence would prevent even "tactical" aggression: isn't that what we all hope, all the time? And, finally, please note what Reagan didn't say. He didn't say, as in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr Strangelove*: "If those Commie bastards just so much as move a muscle we'll hit them with every nuke we've got." He didn't say: "I'm damned if we're going to get fried to a crisp for those lily-livered, double-talking, fat-assed Europeans—let 'em sizzle if they won't pay for their own defence." Far from it. However confused his syntax may have seemed, Reagan's message merely rephrased long-standing policies of deterrence and flexible response.

STILL, EVEN IF I've convinced you that there was no real "gaffe" and certainly no disloyalty, how many people now believe the opposite? Probably several million. Wittingly or not, Herr Schreitter-Schwarzenfeld launched his sib. Wittingly or not, the rest of the media took it up, polished it, and sped it on its way. There's a moral in this for conscientious pressmen. Check your quotations carefully—don't quote out of context—don't sacrifice comprehensive reporting for the sake of a juicy "lead." Or maybe the truth should buy track shoes, and the President should buy Sir Ernest Gowers's *Plain Words*. If not, we may need a verbal *Reaganschirm* as well as a nuclear umbrella.

M

At the Pool

My four-year-old daughter
points up at the low
ceiling with a cry:
"Look at the shadow
of the water on the sky!"

Derek Mahon

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NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from Germany

The Peace Warriors

By Horst Krueger

Frankfurt-am-Main

NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, there is a new longing, *eine neue Sehnsucht*, abroad in the land—it calls itself the Peace Movement. Where precisely the new impetus came from is difficult to determine, but at least since the Protestant conclave last year of the *Evangelischer Kirchentag* deep inroads have been made into German public opinion. Although Moscow must be very pleased at the turn of events, it is highly doubtful whether its local friends and sympathisers play anything but a small role in the manipulation of appeals, meetings, mass demonstrations. The moving force comes from somewhere inside this Republic, and this does not include "the masses": no one has yet seen worried workers or impassioned peasants shouting pacifist slogans in the streets or village marketplace. The official trade-union movement has declared its vague sympathies but has not yet actively enlisted itself in the cause. Where the new impulses come from are the marginal groups of the bourgeois middle classes, and these include intellectuals, young socialists, pastors, ecologists and a whole variety of "outsiders", all united to "mean well" and "do good." Not far from all this lies the point where, in 1968, the red flag of Revolution was being waved; now it is the white flag of Peace which is being raised high. The new chant, in the catchy verse rhythms which have become popular, is "*Frieden schaffen ohne Waffen!*", summing up the misty hope of somehow creating a peace without weapons.

I don't want to beat around the bush, and so I must say at the outset that I simply do not trust "the peace" they want to create. The whole movement strikes me as an unattractive mixture of starry-eyed naivety and arrogant aggressiveness. Of a pacific spirit in any real sense of the phrase there is hardly a sign. But clearly visible, although they pretend to be in the underground, are anarchists and other militants of the Far Left, the wild-eyed *Chaoten* (always ready to help out with a little chaos), and even a few recognisable terrorist types. The bomb attacks on various US Army camps and officers were claimed for the "Peace Fighters", as they go about "declaring war on Imperialist war (*Krieg dem imperialistischen Krieg!*). . . ." Although there are efforts to run their demonstrations in an orderly and peaceful fashion (as in Bonn), the average German *Bürger* is not impressed by a struggle for peace which involves burning cars, smashing windows, and injuring policemen (as in West Berlin in the anti-Haig riots).

The very appropriation (or, rather, misappropriation) of the word is an act of political presumption, as if the desire to keep peace in Europe and to avoid, prevent, or deter a nuclear conflict were their particular and exclusive virtue. Indeed, as if these were not, in point of fact, the very basis on which the new German Republic was founded after the ruins of the Hitler war. It was indubitably on that basis that we have been enjoying for more than a generation now the opportunities of an agreeable life in Germany marked by peace with freedom—and only because Germany and her Western Allies were armed sufficiently to make any aggression against it a senseless undertaking. Only this balance of power or, if you will, balance of terror made the Central European area of a divided German *Reich* into a zone of peace. So long as this obtains a great new war will continue to be prevented or deterred, for obviously any attack from one side or the other will cause one's self-destruction.

ONE ALMOST FEELS ASHAMED to have to recite these elementary truths; but such tried and tested precepts for survival simply carry no weight with the enthusiasts of the Peace Movement. They are invincibly indifferent to the prospect of shifting the balance of power in the favour of the East. The increasing weakness of the Western cause leaves them cold. It is as if an amnesia plagues them, forgetting utterly the tragic lesson of the 1930s when the one-sided disarmament of the Western powers and the one-sided rearmament of the Axis powers encouraged Hitler . . . to make war.

But can one expect any political thinking from these peace fighters? or indeed any analysis at all? I am not trying to be captious, only to get at the heart of the movement—which is emotional. They are arguing, if argument it is, with sentiments, feelings, fears, all packed into a paralysing nervousness about the imminent catastrophe; they parade the utter hopelessness of the situation and calculate to thrive in the dark sense of doom. On all sides they can be found riding with the Apocalypse. Of all the

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new fashionable phrases the most revealing one is what one hears everywhere: "*Ich habe Angst.*" There is, alas, no Anxiety-thermometer to measure exactly how fearful they really are, but it pleases young and old to say it, in round-table discussions, TV-talk shows, and wherever. The confession (made sometimes with grimaces, sometimes in high spirits) is usually greeted with applause. *Angst* is now just about as "in" as the slogan of *Revolution* was in the 1960s. It could be that emotions will influence our history more than abstract ideas.

Our German emotions sometimes do run deep, and I would not want to deny the subjective sincerity which is, for the most part, undeniable. Who would want to deny that anxiety belongs to mankind's existential make-up? But I cannot for the life of me see how hundreds of thousands of Germans (and soon it may well be millions) suddenly in the year 1981 get overwhelmed by feelings of fear and trembling. Because of the so-called "Neutron Bombs" which the Americans may be delivering to their NATO Allies? If this *Angst*-complex were truly authentic, then surely it must have also been triggered by the presence just a few miles to the East of already existing nuclear rockets ominously pointed directly at them. The incredible "unilateralism" of the Peace Movement is matched by the unbelievable one-sidedness of its nervous reactions. The Peace Fighters do not seem to be seriously upset by the fearful weapons of the Soviet war-machine. They are upset to the extremes of *Angst* by the efforts of the West to take countermeasures for its own proper defence. I suppose if one took the trouble, in an earnest political discussion, to press them they might concede that, in the last analysis, they want no deterrent defence at all, no balance of power, no atom bombs or nuclear rockets or anything else horrific. They only want to be disarmed.

One should also note that within this whole movement, and not only in Western Germany, there is the beginning of a new wave of anti-Americanism. What it comes down to, after all, is that the Americans are the ones who are the cause of the trouble, and as time goes on will be getting us all into even more trouble. It is only a small short-circuit further to the conclusion that the USA is the enemy; that the Yankees ("Go Home!") have to be resisted, fought, got rid of, for they are the real dangers to peace. . . . Let me be permitted my own note of fear mixed with a little anxiety: for I too am afraid—of the irrationalities of this movement which speaks peace and will make a wilderness.

"From Negotiation to Surrender"

THE TRUE vulnerability of the West still lies where it always has, in the field of conventional armaments. The likelihood of the Soviet Union believing that they could launch a nuclear attack on Europe without suffering instant retaliation is, by any standards, utterly remote. That they might risk launching a massive conventional attack that could attain its objectives before the decision to use nuclear weapons could be reached at all is, alas, much more easily conceivable.

So long as the conventional balance remains so uneven, the Western strategy of relying on the first use of nuclear weapons to defend ourselves is not only morally dubious but politically and militarily incredible. But the responsibility for this strategy does not lie with the United States. It lies with the governments and peoples of Western Europe who have, for the last thirty years, refused to take the necessary measures to provide for their own conventional defence.

THAT IS WHERE the CND is so dangerous. Their present campaign is sending a signal both to Moscow and to the United States, not simply that the peoples of Western Europe are not prepared to defend themselves with nuclear weapons, but that they are not prepared to defend themselves at all: a signal that could create a quite terrifying degree of instability by presenting the leaders of the Soviet Union with options that hitherto have been firmly closed to them.

If Monsignor Bruce Kent and Mr E. P. Thompson were to make clear their own commitment to maintaining and strengthening alternative non-nuclear defences, and devote their considerable organizational and oratorical powers to persuading their followers to do the same, they might really make some progress towards banning the bomb. At present, I am afraid, they are vulnerable to the charge, if I may borrow one of Mr Thompson's own highly expressive phrases, of "trying to hurry the people of England, **without thinking,** *over the threshold from negotiation to surrender".*

Michael Howard
in THE TIMES *(London)*

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London Commentary

Parties, Wet & Dry

By Edward Pearce

"SPLIT, splitting and in quest to split extreme; / A bliss in proof —and proved, a very woe. . . ." The Shakespearean sonnet, suitably modified, seems apt for our times: for the urge to split or at least to quarrel openly is apparent in all our parties and was given a wonderful outing at conference time. We shall have three parties seriously contesting the next general election, or more precisely, we shall have two full parties in conflict with two half-parties tenuously linked in alliance.

Nobody loves anybody any longer; and to the rages of conflicting opinion are added the terrors and expedients of prospective defeat. There are now 34 members of the Social Democratic and Liberal Party alliance (uncharitably christened SODPAL). One of them, alas for your unwisely dogmatic correspondent, being Mr William Pitt, now MP for Croydon NW. To this feather another has been added—a triumphant plume, at Crosby, Lancashire. It was bad enough for the Tories to lose a very safe seat, but the Tories *are* the governing party and the swing from Labour voters was even greater, an unacknowledged referendum between Labour's two historic wings.

But splits there surely are. Even, in a mild and unimportant way, in the glittering new Social Democratic Party itself, which gets by with four leaders on the same principle perhaps as the 19th-century peer who reckoned that he "could jog along very happily on £30,000 a year." This leadership by barber-shop quartet has a good deal to do with two of the four being currently out of Parliament. But at least it reflects the differences between a mild Left (symbolised by Mrs Shirley Williams) and a temperate Right (embodied in Mr Roy Jenkins). They all agree about the wonderfulness of European unity and share a non-unilateralist view of Defence; but some still have the itch to reform, notably in education, together with a measure of hung-over egalitarianism, while others favour the most radical and far-reaching version of the *status quo* imaginable. The most recondite insult so far cast at the Social Democrats, one which alludes to Mr Jenkins' wine-wise taste for a light French red and his friends' essential Tory-like soundness, has been "Aston Villa." That soccer club for the 110 years of its existence has always worn a shirt known as "Claret and Blue." Unfortunately for the aimer of the dart, the English football league was won last year . . . by Aston Villa! However, the differences of opinion, though not mortal, did lead one SDP MP to ask, "Tell me, who do you want as leader?" When I replied truthfully, "Roy Jenkins", he said, "Ah, now we can talk. . . ." For Mrs Williams, while a gifted and even inspired television presence—she has a soft-spoken reasonableness, a fallibility-acknowledging quality which always reminds one a little of Mr Reagan—does not find her popularity reaching backstage. There have been rather too many private flouncings and attitude-strikings. Dignity has been stood upon until it is black-and-blue. And then again Mrs Williams is essentially still a "Socialist", though one who has found Labour's new black-leather Marxist-Leninist mood intolerable. Differences should not be made too much of, but Mrs Williams is treasured by her Parliamentary colleagues as a superlative communicator while they would be quietly appalled to have her as leader.

HOWEVER, THAT DIVISION is the merest spring shower compared with the effects created by Hurricane Tony Benn, or even the steady, soaking drizzle of the Tory wets in their February-in-Manchester mood. Mr Benn was of course rejected in his pitch for the deputy leadership (and the succession) but by only 0.8% of the vote. And a sourness which would put a dinosaur's teeth on edge attends the fact that a third of the Parliamentary Left, headed by the shadow Industry Minister Stanley Orme and the shadow Education-spokesman Neil Kinnock, voted for the cop-out candidate John Silkin first time, and on the second ballot did not vote at all.

Knives are now out for the old-style Left among the trainee-yahoos in the constituencies. The personal revulsion against Mr Benn runs as wide as it runs deep. He is a man as to whom devoted, undeviating fairly left-wing MPs will say things which not merely cannot be attributed, but which cannot even be printed. He is widely seen as a selfish, vain, more than slightly preposterous politician with a vast verbal facility which skims him over the surface of difficult problems, making destruction infinitely more congenial than responsibility; and it is felt that despite his left-of-Left views and their detectable tinge of hysteria, he has the arrogance of the worst sort of *milord* (he

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once was one before renouncing his late father's title) together with an individualistic contempt for any group on whose side he may notionally be supposed to be. They don't like him.

BUT THE BENN CAMPAIGN is part of the wider programme of the hard-core Left (Militant Tendency, International Marxist Group, Socialist Workers, *et al.*) to take over local constituency parties much as a financial syndicate might carry out an asset-stripping operation on the stock market. This has been made easier by the fact that mainstream Labour politics have polarised rhetoric and practice in a way which is ultimately destructive of morale. Surely Harold Wilson has a large responsibility for what happened, though there is a reasonable case for saying that his administration of 1964–70 was not an altogether bad one for the country, especially in the terrible light of Mr Edward Heath.

Wilson was a cynic and an avoider of trouble. If left-wing rhetoric was called for, while relatively sensible policies were pursued by stealth, that seemed a price worth paying. In the process he seemed to appease left-wing ideologues, and let debate go by the board. Now a serious political party, whatever capital it may give its opponents in the process, must always be arguing. Ideas are thrown against ideas to see which stand up. In the late 1950s and early '60s Hugh Gaitskell and Anthony Crosland, together with John Strachey, Douglas Jay, Patrick Gordon Walker and their young protégé Roy Jenkins, offered a cohesive, principled case. You agreed with it or disagreed; there were no foam-rubber options. When CND *Mark I* came along it was met by Hugh Gaitskell with the sort of rigorous passion which it deserved. Gaitskell died, Crosland declined in office, conflict got a bad name; Harold Wilson, with all his virtues, his personal kindness, his element of human sympathy, *was* the foam-rubber option.

In consequence the Labour Party became an administrative mechanism with all the moral flaws of a natural party of office. The present left-wing—the product of the raw unprocessed education which the Wilson administration and its report-writing dons infiltrated on to the market—has come to inherit a party where nobody would bother or dare to argue with them. It ought never to be forgotten that when the left-wing majority on Labour's National Executive were likely to impose their will in some gruesome way on a difficult topic, senior Ministers avoided embarrassment by leaving before the vote. This was the habitual practice of Sir Harold, and he was regularly joined in this symbolic act of flinching by Mrs Williams. The exception to this practice (and he only emerged later) was Peter Shore. When Benn in shadow cabinet put forward his latest proposal to hand over the next Thursday but one to a committee of shop stewards to be run as a loss-guaranteed socialist-workers' Co-operative, the generality of members turned, shrugging and depressed, away. Shore would force Benn to define his terms, to cost out his industrial operation, explain how it would actually work, and generally leave him in the red. But Shore, who is now recognised as Labour's last best hope, was quite exceptional.

THIS VOID IN THOUGHT, this congenital antipathy to ideas, is applauded nowhere so much as in those parts of the Tory Party which vaguely suppose themselves progressive. "Too much theory . . . damned doctrinaire female . . . abstract ideas all very well for foreign economists. . . ." These are not untypical of the current of conversation among the Prime Minister's critics. They mask a notion so breathtakingly self-interested as to be very near the truth: that the Conservative Party is a mechanism for rich men to stay rich at least in their own life-times. From such a standpoint, while it is sometimes useful to wheel out our portable and readily pregnant Royal Family to keep the masses happy, and sometimes appropriate to make patriotic and nationalistic noises, it is also essential to affect compassion, or something which is called compassion, in order to keep all the brutes in their place. They want the workers to be content. It would be a bad mistake to underestimate the social strategy of the rich; accordingly, Lord Keynes was bespoke tailoring for the inheriting class. The idea of dishonest little booms being engineered just in time to turn all the graph-lines in the right direction for a few inches on the paper—for a few months in the year, while the election was seen off—reached its repulsive apotheosis in Harold Macmillan's electoral charade of 1959.

The measure of Tory inadequacy is that there are large groups and distinguished individuals who really suppose that such a confidence trick can be pulled off again in the context of the present Western economy. And the measure of their political understanding is that some of them do not even realise that it *is* a confidence trick. Interestingly, during the Tories' acrimonious conference in the dread resort of Blackpool, the code name used by all the anti-Thatcher speakers (including members of her Government) was "*Disraeli.*" Now, in a bad, flickering light Disraeli can be represented as an idealist, a social conciliator, and, as the code flashers grindingly added, a prophet of "One Nation." But this is not the place to linger long on that eminent Victorian, his royal hobbies, his economic lobbies, and general ambiguities. No party is complete without a revered ancestor, but

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there is something lacking in either the knowledge or the morality of those who take that frail figure as their beacon-light. However, Disraeli and the considerably more attractive Stanley Baldwin have great appeal among anti-government Tories at the moment precisely because they are associated with unstrenuous times and easy politics.

Our unemployment is part of the West's unemployment, more notably so since the recent jump in West German figures. But it is also a consequence of the long years of mismanagement and overmanning which went along with easy money and a public sector endowed with commercial immortality. The real criticisms which ought to be aimed at the Government concern a failure to mount an assault on the local government, civil service, health and education administrative payrolls. Instead, zombie-like, they over-paid £3 billions to teachers on the recommendation of a "wise man", a professor hired to state, Aquinas-like, the just sum. We need panels of such wise men the way we need firing squads. The British public sector creates feelings of despair; it is almost untouched by the unemployment which falls on the makers of things-to-sell; it has tenure. Not uncommonly it negotiates wage increases above the average. It is a sacred monster, a great herd of Hindu cattle, a crime to assault and impossible to maintain.

But the present Government, with all its defects (and in despite of the dishonest electoral poster of 1979 which depicted an unemployment queue) usually functions well above that level. By way of continuous sniping between the Prime Minister and her Treasury Ministers on the one hand and the Cabinet Disraelians who have set a new low in collective irresponsibility on the other, some courage and resolution is shown. When cuts were refused by spending ministers, the Chancellor of the Exchequer took the money in tax. We have spent too much, but nothing like the figure which the bubble-blowing element regard as wise and mature statesmanship. It is genuinely possible that industry, after going through more fire and water than it thought there was, has emerged diminished but more competitive with the sort of labour unit-costs which should have been our national preoccupation fifteen years ago. And, above all, nerve has not yet been lost.

PRECISELY BECAUSE the Tory Party moves slowly to thought, if at all, it longs for a beguiling little operation to make life easier and re-election more likely. "Better to get it wrong and be back next time", they say, "than to get it right and lose. . . ." But is it? The one reason for panic is fear of a far-Left Government. The one likely conclusion from recent months is that such a government of the disarming, nationalising, reflating-by-20-billions sort (Mr Benn's figure) is progressively less likely.

The whole point about recent evidence, which includes local government by-elections as well as the parliamentary seat of Croydon, is that although the Tories have nothing to cheer about, it is Labour which is being hammered into the ground. The new *Bennista* party (and it is seen as that despite Benn's 0.8% deficit in Denis Healey's victory) has consolidated its control all right, but the electorate is showing monumental consumer resistance. Croydon was a far worse result for Labour since that was precisely the sort of marginal seat whose winning is a precondition to success in a general election. We are all familiar in Britain with tactical voting whereby supporters of Party *X*, too far back to have a chance, switch coolly to Party *Y* if, according to the opinion polls, it seems to be within hitting range of the detested Party *Z*. But what happened to Labour at Croydon (and, for that matter, at Crosby) was a mass refusal to treat it as the Opposition Party. Now in the nature of things Governments are liable to be unpopular, and those with three million unemployed quite exceptionally liable; yet it was Her Majesty's Loyal but beaten-up Opposition which collapsed to the bottom of the poll. There is very little reason for the Conservative Party to panic. The risk of the country being governed by the parliamentary wing of conspiratorial Marxist group-therapy is slight, and is receding fast. The prospects don't look terribly good even for Mr Michael Foot, a November wasp filling the interim.

THERE ARE many criticisms to be made of the Social Democrats; no man of discernment should be seen out alone with the Liberals. But none of the permutations which can be put together out of a likely three-party finish will be malign. Silly and patchy, possibly, but also quite capable, under the hand of the toughest ever post-War Chancellor (Roy Jenkins) to offer a continuation of Thatcherism by other and suaver means. This may not be the result I would personally desire, but it has to be set against the scenario which unhinges certain Tory psyches. The rich have a terror of retribution. Much of their compassion—concern for inner-city slums and desire for massive overseas aid (always with other people's money)—derives from a crude, unspoken, not quite acknowledged belief that the people underneath will destroy them unless they are bought off. There is about their thinking a considerable Burkean element of "the mob ripping up the Tuileries, marching on the Bastille." The Tory wets fear revolution more than the Tory dries, but coming up the drive there is neither Marat nor Lenin—only an affable Roy Jenkins arguing politely with Shirley Williams.

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Letter from Paris

Diplomatic Double-Think

By Raymond Aron

THE POINT ABOUT Ronald Reagan's statement on the use of nuclear weapons in Europe was not the statement itself, which merely repeated what we already knew, but the reaction of journalists, politicians, and the general public all over Western Europe.

Replying to a journalist's question, the American President had said that the use of nuclear weapons on the battlefield did not necessarily involve the start of the Apocalypse (pressing the button, dispatching strategic nuclear weapons). This possibility has been mentioned any number of times by all the NATO general staffs, even though it contradicts the thesis put forward twenty years ago by the Kennedy team, namely that if one or the other of the Big Two powers were to cross the nuclear threshold, there was no possible safety mechanism left, and the killing would go to the last extreme.

The Soviet *SS-20*s, "theatre strategic missiles", to use Reagan's expression, alter the basic balance of power. As regards the United States, these missiles are *not* "strategic", because they cannot cross the Atlantic; for Europe, they do have a strategic implication, because they can hit any target in any of our continental hinterlands.

The Pershing-2 and Cruise missiles planned for introduction in 1983 cannot reach the Soviet hinterland; but they are capable of hitting the western provinces of the USSR. Now the Soviets have always insisted that they would draw no distinction between American missiles, whether they originated in Europe or from the USA itself, if they were aimed at Soviet territory. Hence the Euro-missiles envisaged in the Western plan, far from increasing the risk of "decoupling"—of isolating the Continent as a field-of-battle for the Big Two powers—maintain the connection between the European theatre and the essential global balance.

The protests, the demands for "explanations", and the chorus of invective that broke out just about everywhere have, in my view, nothing to do with President Reagan's clumsiness or with the ambiguity of his language. Financed,[1] infiltrated, and encouraged by Moscow, the Peace movement in the West German Republic is gradually gaining support also outside the left wing of the SPD and in circles other than those of the radical young and the Protestant Church. Much more than that, it has begun to turn the heads of politicians hitherto impervious to emotional impulses. Recent speculations on nuclear strategy are creating opportunities or pretexts for outbursts of feeling which, in the last analysis, express an almost unconscious wish—we do not want to be defended; we accept the risk of falling under Soviet domination, rather than the risk, small though it may be, of a war which might turn nuclear.

[1] ED. NOTE. The hard evidence for this comes only intermittently to the surface: after all, a vast apparatus is there to see to it that it is not easily detectable or discernible. But the following news item (*Daily Mail*, 5 November 1981) may give some indication:

> "A Russian diplomat has been expelled from Denmark after being accused of spying. Vladimir Merkoulov, Second Secretary at the Soviet Embassy in Copenhagen, was involved in 'illegal activities', said the Danish Government.
>
> He was accused of campaigning against the setting up of NATO depots in Denmark, supporting people opposed to the country's membership of NATO, and encouraging support for activists wanting to turn Scandinavia into 'a nuclear-free zone.'
>
> Last night security police said they had arrested author Arne Petersen and his wife who were also accused of espionage. Police said the couple had received money from Merkoulov to pay for adverts supporting an atomic-free area in Scandinavia."

Question: "Is this an isolated phenomenon, a local accidental incident? Or is it the detectable part of a general pattern in which the Soviet apparatus is throwing its support, including financial resources, behind the useful anti-NATO anti-American campaign? . . ." *Discuss.*

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WE MET THIS STATE OF MIND 30 years ago in the early 1950s, when the Korean War was raging: it expressed itself then (as now) in the slogan "Better Red than Dead." Thirty years of the Atlantic Alliance have demonstrated that there is a third possibility. In France, the defeatism which has not spared the United Kingdom (where the Labour Party leadership has come out in favour of unilateral disarmament) has come up against strong statements by the President of the Republic and by the Foreign Minister. But the Communists have flouted Cabinet solidarity and have revived *le mouvement de la paix*, of Stalinist memory. The theoretical magazine of the Socialist Party's leftist CERES group openly criticises the government's "Atlanticism."

By an irony of history, François Mitterrand finds himself saddled with a task which he would probably have been only too happy to leave to other men. Not that his present Atlanticism is in contradiction to his statements and behaviour in the time of the Fourth Republic; but, obviously, his declared, official, and much-heralded *tiers-mondisme* would have tended to align him with the opposite camp.

Claude Cheysson lays as much stress on the Franco-American agreement on East-West relations as on their disagreement on North-South relations. The barrier raised by Mitterrand against the neutralist tide in Europe seems to me so well-founded that I might almost have ignored the Franco-Mexican statement and other distractions; they may be the politically necessary counterpart of European "Atlanticism." But I do not believe it possible to ignore the world-wide dimensions of Soviet diplomacy, and in so doing confine resistance to the Soviet Empire's expansionism only to Europe.

It is true that American diplomacy too often tends to perceive the world's innumerable conflicts solely through a lens focused on the rivalry between USSR and USA (or the West, or the Free World). But that does not justify the French Foreign Minister in reproaching Washington for "introducing" that rivalry into Central America, where it is claimed to be "out of place." Cuba and Fidel Castro may originally have been out of place in the East-West conflict; but Castro's Cuba has put its expeditionary forces at the disposal of Soviet expansionism in Africa. It is not the imagination of Washington that creates the link between Cuba and Angola; that link is composed of Cuban soldiers, stationed in bases thousands of miles from their island home.

OF COURSE the French Foreign Minister may argue that in order to protect Central America or some other part of the world from a revolution that would set up a Soviet-type of régime and cooperate with Moscow, it is better policy to support the reformists, while there is still time, rather than a string of right-wing despots. No doubt about it. But once the revolutionaries are commanded by a Marxist-Leninist party owing its allegiance to Moscow, then the French attitude, whatever it may be, has at long last to pay heed to the dangerous East-West implications.

Similarly, in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict should not be confused with the East-West conflict. Yet at the same time these two conflicts cannot be easily disentangled. Saudi Arabia fears Moscow—and also hates the presence of Israel in Jerusalem. The Palestine Liberation Organisation is one of the organisations representing the Palestinians—but the PLO has established close financial and military ties with Moscow. Many diplomats in West European foreign ministries claim to favour a PLO Palestinian state on the right bank of the Jordan; but in private there are very few foreign ministers who do not fear the looming Soviet presence on the West Bank by way of the PLO.

Obviously Moscow is not responsible for all the troubles of the world—but it is never far removed from them. I remain critical of the equivocal nature of an "anti-Sovietism" which confines itself to a resistance to Moscow-inspired take-overs only within the narrow boundaries of Europe.

Unmentionable

House of Commons

DAY TWO of the week-long Queen's Speech debate yesterday was concerned with foreign affairs and defence.

Some Labour members expressed deep foreboding about nuclear strategy—our own and that of the United States, that of the Soviet Union seeming to cause them remarkably little concern.

One noted with relief that it was a Soviet, rather than an American, submarine which had violated neutral Swedish waters. Otherwise the debate would have been disrupted by Left Wing back-bench disorder, as outside Professor E. P. Thompson and his hordes brought Central London to a halt. The cry would have gone up: how dare the United States launch this unparalleled act of aggression against Sweden; the world's first welfare state; the nation which invented the whole concept of abortion; the homeland of Dag Hammarskjöld, Strindberg, Ingmar Bergman, and indeed Ingrid Bergman.

As it was, the Russians had done the violating and so the subject was never mentioned.

Frank Johnson
in THE TIMES (*London*)

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Strange Correspondences

On Ezra Pound—By ALAN JENKINS

FLAUBERT USED TO SAY that if more people had read his *L'Éducation Sentimentale* the disasters of 1870 would never have happened. Ezra Pound was fond of quoting this; indeed it became almost axiomatic for him. But could anything have prevented the wreckage of Pound's life? For all the great body of work he left, hewn or hammered out rather than composed, and the years given over to the recording of "hydraulic opinions", as Berryman called them, in books, essays, letters, articles and reviews, a wreckage is what it amounts to. In Peter Ackroyd's *Ezra Pound and his World*[1] we come across this, written in St Elizabeth's hospital: "If only I had read Confucius earlier . . . I would not be in this mess." Combining blithely Olympian assurance with exasperated regret—not, I think, humility—was a habit which Pound never lost, and though Ackroyd is either evasive or over-tolerant about the difficulties this presents, his book is at its best on the painful years of Pound's involvement with Fascism, and his incarceration, first in the cage at Pisa, then the ward for the criminally insane. Though perhaps too sympathetic, too eager to explain or excuse, Ackroyd conveys a memorable sense of the combined dignity and despair with which Pound met his treatment by the "half-savage country" he could not even see he had betrayed. It is easy to believe that Pound's psyche never recovered from that treatment, and the final pages dealing with Pound's prolonged silence, broken only by self-accusation and, occasionally, self-laceration ("It's a botch . . . I knew too little about so many things . . . that's not the way to make a *work* of art"), make painful reading too.

Perhaps because of this, the photographs of the same period (and Pound's career, as Ackroyd notes, is emphatically one of "periods", in the manner of Picasso's), showing Pound prowling around Venice in black cape and wide-brimmed hat, are utterly compelling—as are all the photographs Ackroyd has tracked down and included. His text is an engagingly lively, readable but far too uncritical commentary on this marvellous photographic record, retelling the tale with a little more compression than it can easily bear. We hear of Pound's London, Paris and Rapallo "periods", of the "mouvemong", of his ferocity in campaigning, his inexhaustible energy in promoting, propagandising, *organising*. But the poetry and criticism are touched on too briefly; extracts are quoted, taken more or less at face value, and left. There is too little recognition, for instance, of the fact that Pound's remarkable critical output brings us up short, time after time, against lapses of taste and touch, errors of judgment and impatient wrong-headedness (as, most strikingly, in his pronouncements on Flaubert and Joyce). There are some murmurings about the more damaging lack of direction and achievement in Pound's poetry before *Lustra*, and the contrast between this—its ironies not unremarked by Pound's friends and allies, notably Wyndham Lewis—and his firm, vigorously defended critical principles of the same time. But it all becomes curiously *neutral*, a way of "explaining" the Pound phenomenon by dramatising a succession of roles and games, rather than coming to grips with the "emotive furnace" that was fuelling and sustaining them.

Pound remarked with characteristic impatience of Arnold (and of Eliot), "Poetry is about as much a 'criticism of life' as red-hot iron is a criticism of fire." That is extraordinary, and right; but Pound could never stand farther back from the red-hot life of words than this, or see how a "criticism of life" could somehow be implied in the process of producing them: the lightning-speed insights, the barked, staccato verdicts, the whole excitement and sweep, "the *push* of the man" are of a piece as witness to that—though his poetry often has so remarkably little "fire" itself. Ackroyd conveys much of this excitement and push, the "and his World" side, but very little of Ezra Pound, because there is room for so little of the work, and it is in this that Pound lives. Within the constraints imposed by the nature of the series, Ackroyd has done a good job; but his book will hardly replace

[1] *Ezra Pound and his World*. By PETER ACKROYD. Thames and Hudson, £5.95.

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the short general introductions—humane, perceptive, "fair-minded"—by G. S. Fraser and Donald Davie.

Though Pound is in so many ways an exemplary figure (a life of "errors and wrecks", set against the current of the century; its poetic triumphs a kind of minimal salvage: "The ant's a centaur in his dragon world"; "form is cut in the lute's neck, tone is from the bowl", a work of restoring to their proper value the insights and "moments" obscured by time or muddied perceptions) he is far from being uniquely, compulsively so. When we think of the great modernist literary artists of the early 1900s we are just as likely, as Gabriel Josipovici has remarked, to think of Eliot and Kafka, quiet, dark-suited men who spent their days in offices and passed anonymously among the rats' alleys and burrows of European cities, as of Pound or, say, Marinetti, flamboyant, violent, iconoclastic temperaments who convulsed their worlds and constantly created new ones around themselves. Beside the subtle, haunted, almost hallucinatory quality of Eliot's or Kafka's vision, much of Pound's work has the crudeness and velocity of a steam-hammer. Yet Pound's is a more genuinely, single-mindedly *artistic* intelligence than we find anywhere else.

HE WOULD CERTAINLY have acknowledged the contrast, with Eliot in particular; what he sought was rather "luminosity in vision . . . power of visualization as distinct from hallucination." Where he could not find this or failed to achieve it, he willed it into being, as when he expounded the task of the *Cantos* as one of "orderly visualization . . . which neither confuses nor annoys the visionary." Both these statements are quoted by Ian F. A. Bell in his *Critic as Scientist*;[2] more precisely, in his chapter modestly but not inaccurately headed "Towards a Conclusion." Here Bell extrapolates from some of Pound's reviews and isolated utterances the proposition that Pound espoused a "physiological aesthetics"; that this was implied by his "materialist transcendentalism"; that the use of physiology to formulate an aesthetic was essentially part and parcel of the enterprise which prompted Pound to adopt the vocabulary of the natural and physical sciences, as well as specific analogies from biology and electromagnetism, in forming his critical positions and working hypotheses; and finally that this

> "represented the most intimate means whereby the organicist epistemology incorporated in transcendentalism sought a materiality for the correspondences that structured its being."

[2] *Critic as Scientist: The Modernist Poetics of Ezra Pound*. By IAN F. A. BELL. Methuen, £14.

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This is an extreme but not unique example of Bell's method and "mode of discourse", and it should go without saying that his book is very densely written, his argument very difficult, in places, to follow. This, and the "totalising" tendency which it shares with Pound's own criticism, puts Bell's book in the same class of new Pound scholarship—highly serious, "technical", intellectually demanding—as Alan Durant's *Ezra Pound: Identity in Crisis*, a fascinating, and exceptionally convoluted, Lacanian "reassessment" of the *œuvre* and the man. *Critic as Scientist* offers an extraordinarily thorough exposition of a single and, it seems to me, valuable insight: that many of Pound's critical pronouncements employ the language of science or the analogy of scientific research in a systematic attempt to establish the "seriousness of the artist" and, more than this, to support, to render persuasively in the simplest possible way, a complex and extraordinary angle of vision. According to Bell, "as the pressures of modernity and of being modern increased after 1910, so too did those of diction" (to read this book entails a struggle with Bell's unfortunate style, though not all sentences are as bad as this); Pound's solution to the problem ("I hadn't in 1910 made a language, I don't mean a language to use, but a language to think in") was to make *his* language out of the terms already available in scientific discourse. Early on, Bell admits disarmingly that he is not overconcerned with evidence—or lack of it—as to whether Pound had actually read the texts he proceeds to cite as sources of this "scientific" vocabulary. These things were, rather, "in the air", and it was natural that Pound should have picked them up, given his particular range of activities and connections.

Leaving aside (as Bell does) the question of the extent to which the nature of any "discourse" contributes to the meaning of its component words—so that scientific terms used *outside* scientific discourse take on a very different, and as it were even more metaphorical, weight—we hear how Pound derived from Whistler and Whitman, two authentic antecedents of his "Yankee temperament", an emphasis on professional and practical virtues; a capacity for abstraction in the sense of "non-representational arrangements", for providing "keys" to the patterns and energies of the material universe—the "equations of eternity" (to recreate which the artist became a geometer, *vide* Gaudier-Brzeska and Wyndham Lewis); an attachment to the "provisory", the open-ended, experimental and exploratory as opposed to the "finished" or mimetic work, a greater trust in "rough speech" than in eloquence; and an entrancement with the objects of technology, an awareness of the "demands that practical science imposed upon modes of apprehending the world." To do this Pound had to interpret Whitman and Whistler in the light of Cartesian mathematics ("Poetry", he was to say, "is a sort of inspired mathematics") as adumbrated by Sir Oliver Lodge (*Pioneers of Science*, 1893, reprinted 1913). And so on.

Leaving aside, too, the worrying thought of how hard it is to find any of the above qualities in his poetry before the *Cantos*, we have Pound's analogy of positive and negative poles and the "charged surfaces" of electromagnetism to explain Provençal sexual mysticism, the "tensile energy" of the troubadours' psychology; his language of diagnosis and hygiene to express the revitalising of the novel effected by Flaubert and Joyce, vigorously promoted by Ford Madox Ford; the craftsmanlike image of the modern artist suggested by the insistence of the scientist and the "practical man" on dealing squarely with "the real", on precision and a privileged relation to the world of action, of "building and making"; and the "fields", the lines of force discerned everywhere by modern physics which had a profound effect on Pound's "vortex" of perceptual and creative energies. (Bell's chapter "The Vortex" is by far the most interesting, and is less marred by repetitiveness and obscurity—this often the result of handling difficult notions, but sometimes of using artificially souped-up diction and clumsy but important-sounding constructions to make a simple idea seem complicated and portentous—than the others.)

THROUGHOUT, THERE IS a too-ready acceptance of any and every "scientific" utterance of Pound's or anyone else's as self-evidently significant. Bell has been possessed by the demon of analogy; he sees convergence or identity of thought where Pound may have recognised only contiguity or overlap. And, most worryingly, while there are suggestions as to where such-and-such a theoretical position was leading Pound in the public world towards which his gestures of modernity were so strenuously directed, while there are darker hints, too, of Pound's sinister attempts to "control" the modes of discourse he was simultaneously trying to forge, and through them to control the public sphere of his writings (an attempt in which Eliot and Joyce, in their very different ways, are also, apparently, implicated), there is little analysis. Whose "real", for instance, was it that Pound saw himself bringing criticism and the arts into line with? How fully had he understood the terms which he found to hand?

One answer to the first question is implicitly provided by Bell in his chapters "Correspondences" and "The Vortex", and it is a good deal more subtle, rich and strange than many previous understandings have taken into account. It is reinforced by earlier quotations from works—all of which Pound read, reviewed or pondered—

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concerned with the nature of language, particularly poetic language; some of the material is familiar to readers of Hugh Kenner, but there are illuminating or highly suggestive extracts from Emerson, Huxley, Hudson Maxim and an American journalist and critic, James Huneker (whose work impressed Eliot as well as Pound) alongside the more predictable Fenollosa and Ford. These extracts, full of riches for anyone who has been excited or intrigued by Pound's poetics, his poetry and/or criticism, reveal an intellectual and imaginative world dominated by "strange correspondences."

Between, for example, Huneker's Joyce, an artist of "objective frigidity", working with "the coldness of impassioned experiment", as Bell puts it, and Pound's Flaubert, writing "a clear hard prose", dealing in "exact presentation." Or between Ford's ideal of a "scientific prose" and a remark of Huxley's on "the change for words in definite images which can only be acquired through the operation of your observing faculties" (to what extent the assumptions of Imagism ran counter to those of the Symbolists—though their aesthetic procedures were sometimes very similar—might be gauged by putting alongside the above remark Mallarmé's reversal of it, "... *à chacun suffirait peut-être pour échanger la pensée humaine, de prendre ou de mettre dans la main d'autrui en silence une pièce de monnaie ...*"). Or again, and still more tellingly, Fenollosa's assertion that "Valid scientific thought consists in following as closely as may be the actual and entangled lines of force as they pulse through things" and his own understanding of the Chinese ideogram, its "verbal idea of action", thence to this:

> "Synthetic thinking demands a pregnant language; rich, juicy, significant, full words, charged with intense meaning. . . . This is poetry, the making a word stand for as much thought and feeling as possible, and that through the mutual modifications of the successive words."

From here to Pound's own definition of poetry as memorable speech, language charged to the utmost with meaning, and to his "image", his demands for compression and directness, the "stroke and shock of it", is but a short step. It is a slightly longer one, though by no means a waste of effort, to Louis Agassiz, von Helmholtz and "the vortex."

Emerson, on Swedenborg, had ventured that "one would swear that the physical world was purely symbolical of the spiritual world"; and that "It is not words only that are emblematic; it is things which are emblematic. . . . Every appearance in nature corresponds to some state of mind, and that state of mind can only be described by presenting that natural appearance as its picture." *Presenting . . . appearance . . . picture*: what a perfect Imagist manifesto! Fenollosa enlarged on it

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as follows: "Metaphor, the revealer of nature, is the very substance of poetry. The known interprets the obscure, the universe is alive with myth"; "Chinese notation is something much more than arbitrary symbols. It is based upon a vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature." Reading such passages, we have the illusion of watching Pound's conception of poetry quicken and take shape before our eyes; we almost feel that we could chart Pound's development as a poet, as on a graph, in some mathematically exact relation to such phrases as "the universe is alive with myth" or "vivid shorthand picture of the operations of nature." And they qualify drastically Pound's insistence that "The natural object is always the *adequate* symbol." Yes; more than adequate, in fact; because for him that natural object was *already* the symbol of something else. This in turn throws a new, and rather contemporary, "period" light on Pound's medievalism; it too, it would seem, was at least partly "in the air."

This is the real fascination of Bell's book: its insistence that science was, for Pound, more than a source of analogy: was, in fact, the vindication and "explanation" of a personal mythology and mysticism, an extraordinary receptiveness to kinds of experience which gave him a direct line to the poetry of Homer and Ovid, Cavalcante and the troubadours. Pound declared:

> "Certain it is that these myths are only intelligible in a vivid glittering sense to those people to whom they occur. . . ."

Those myths, his "gods", were very much bound up with two, for him, overwhelming realities, the natural world and his own sexual drives. They constituted "a permanent basis in humanity, that is to say, I believe that Greek myth arose when someone having passed through delightful psychic experience tried to communicate it to others and found it necessary to screen himself from persecution."

WENDY STALLARD FLORY, in her *Ezra Pound and the Cantos: A Record of Struggle*,[3] alludes to these matters by way of her attempt to "bring together the poet and his poem"; yet, oddly, she tries to do this by distinguishing two *kinds* of struggle, the "moral"—against usury, the "obstructors of knowledge,/ obstructors of distribution"—and the "personal": a struggle for self-knowledge and humility. It is surely falsifying, or at best simplifying, the issue to divide Pound's poem and personality in this way; the *Pisan Cantos* suggest, rather, that the "meditative, nostalgic, and reverential" mood Flory finds in them, if it is there at all, came to Pound accidentally, through force of circumstance and an unwilled exposure to intense suffering: as a direct result, in fact, of the activities and obsessions which inform so many of the preceding cantos, and which are quite definitely part of the "moral" battle. Pound did not achieve humility, but it is possible that he had it thrust upon him. "Self-knowledge" is not necessarily the same thing. Similarly, by way of introduction, she distinguishes "Pound the Man of Letters" and "Pound the Man", and no division could be less appropriate. But in order to support it Flory makes many useful comments on Pound's involvement with Wyndham Lewis and Gaudier-Brzeska.

To the first she traces Pound's distrust of and distaste for "emotion", his authoritarianism and anti-Semitism (if this is true Wyndham Lewis has a lot to answer for), and, inseparable from these but extending beyond them, an attitude of "loathing"—part pose, part expression of powerful impulses—which, as she rightly observes, poisons Pound's writing whenever he puts it on display. To Gaudier's influence she attributes not just the "talismanic" value which Pound conferred on his friend's and on a great deal of sculpture, but, more than this, the peculiar significance and tone of all talk of "carved stone" in the *Cantos* themselves. By emphasising as few have done before the quality of personal devotion in Pound's feeling for Gaudier (hardly hinted at by "And Henri Gaudier went to it, /and they killed him,/And killed a good deal of sculpture" in Canto XVI), Flory makes some sense of Charles Olson's observation that

> "everything Pound has to say and feel *politically* is . . . 30 years old and dead as a duck. . . . It is clear he only experienced war and politics once, in England, World War 1. . . . Maybe it was accidental, but the conjunction of Gaudier's death to the whole conversation appears to me to be important. It is as though Pound has never got over it, that Gaudier's death is the source of his hate for contemporary England and America, that then, in 1915, his attack on democracy got mixed up with Gaudier's death, and all his turn since has been revenge for the boy's death."

On the forms which that "revenge" took—if it was such, and this is a more attractive thing to believe than anything else we could find to explain it; Pound's "turn" was also more than that—Flory is anxious to point out Pound's self-delusions and mistakes: she does, in fact, a lot of apologising for him. But on the welter of his ideas and beliefs, or the imaginative "systems" he constructed for himself prior to the honeymoon with Social Credit and Fascism, Flory is admirably sane and instructive: she is a scholarly and lucid guide through the

[3] *Ezra Pound and the Cantos: A Record of Struggle.* By WENDY STALLARD FLORY. Yale University Press, £12.60, $25.00.

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mazes of his Neo-Platonism and Confucianism, of Eleusis, Chinese and Italian history, Adams and Jefferson. When it comes to the *Cantos* themselves, her central argument provokes more questions than she is able to answer. Her readings are for the most part straightforward paraphrases and unravellings of dense knots of allusion; the straightforwardness is never far from pedestrian or naively simplistic. In spite of this, there are moments that go straight to the heart of the matter, although Flory seldom seems to know where to go from there.

We hear, for instance, of Pound's reluctance or inability to countenance a "personal treatment of emotion in his work"; of how, in *Guide to Kulchur*, after censuring the "serious Victorians, from Hardy to Swinburne", as "non-interveners", he remarks in connection with Hardy that the time has passed when one could "concede such emphasis to the individual elegy and the personal sadness." Was Pound thinking of the War? Flory's gloss is cogent: "... every aesthetic decision which he has made has shown his determination to *resist* the individual elegy", while the situation is seen as one of "public", social or historical import, the problem one of artistic or cultural, rather than personal, propriety. Now this leaves *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* out of account, and the most cursory reading would serve to show that the issue is considerably more complex than Flory here suggests. For *Mauberley* catches with great delicacy the subtle pressures of artistic and personal decorum, and their appropriateness in a given cultural-historical "moment"; it is also in some sense an individual elegy, on one or more of Pound's buried selves. Yet the point is made: that Pound may have been supplying a "confessional" hint when he wrote that "We engage in technical exercise *faute de mieux*, a necessary defensive activity."

Similarly, in a section titled "The Paradisal and its Complications", we hear how "It is clearly difficult for him to reconcile his mythic assertions about sexuality with the realities of his personal experience"—one might say rather, to convince us of the reality of this "experience" whether psychic or sensual, delightful or otherwise, at all, so bound up is it with the mythic—but also, more alarmingly, "with the honesty which we expect of Pound, he does not allow himself to gloss over the disparity between the two." Why do we expect this particular honesty? And surely there is no disparity in the first place? The "dangerousness" of sex, the unmanageableness of desire, the "paradisal" reality of *coitu inluminatio*: these are not easily separable in Pound's world, a world, for Flory as for Bell, of interpenetrations, vital forces and "exteriorised sensibilities", "vibrations" and the modes of registering them, subtle bodies which permit no separation of the sensual and the intellectual; a

FOREIGNERS

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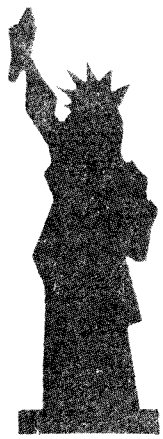
Published November, £17.50.

STREET CORNER SOCIETY

by WILLIAM FOOTE WHYTE

Street Corner Society has long been a sociological classic and the standard reference work for research methods used by field workers in an urban setting. This revised and enlarged *Third Edition* includes a new appendix by Angelo Ralph Orlandella, a corner boy leader who became Whyte's first research assistant, relating the profound effect their collaboration had on Orlandella's life.

Published November, £10.50 cloth, £4.20 paper.



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world of light and vision, "a radiant world where one thought cuts another with clean edge, a world of moving energies '*mezzo oscuro rade*'."

YET IN ALL THIS it is hard to find traces of the man who fell deeply, sexually in love with at least two women—Flory invokes Bride Scratton as well as Olga Rudge—apart from his wife Dorothy. The women reappear, according to Flory, as "sky's clear/night's sea/green of the mountain pool" in the section beginning "there came new subtlety of eyes into my tent" in Canto 81; and it is certainly true that such passages are more "moving" when they are glossed as oblique fragments of personal recollection. But the realities of the situation—Pound and two women, one his wife, established in Rapallo, he regularly making the walking trip between them, passionately desiring the one he did not live with, both women devoted to him—find few echoes in the *Cantos*. It was surely hell for all three, but despite Flory's catch-all phrases, "the hell of the present", "the chaos of the present", and the omnipresent "struggle" (which, by the end, has been tagged on to so many different kinds and registers of Pound's poetry that it has lost all meaning), Pound's "Hell" is a place very unlike his Rapallo, and his pain of a different kind; or, if the pain of sexual jealousy and domestic attrition is there, it is so well concealed, so indirectly evoked, as to be unrecognisable.

Such "concealment" is of a piece with the poem's rapt, astonishingly delicate tone and movement at such moments, its complete fusion of "perception" and another order of vision altogether. And this is in the nature of Pound's mysticism; "not a whirl or madness of the senses, but a glow arising from the exact nature of the perception." Almost as though implicitly acknowledging Pound's embarrassment before the personal, his evasiveness and unease—the falling back on archaic usage or abrasive slang, the personifications, goddesses, "presences" and "energies" that do office for erotic drives, for real women—with his own most powerful feelings and convictions, the strange frigidity, almost a kind of sexlessness, the absence of particularity except in the registering of natural phenomena, the recording of observed fact. As if acknowledging all this, his admirers and followers have chosen to emphasise a far more accessible, less strange and "difficult" poet than Pound really is; and as a result, visual attentiveness, exactitude, the "glow" which arises from such attention and its accurate or vigorous rendering, have been the most enduring legacy of his poetry. This is as it should be, to the extent that Pound strikes us, as he struck Charles Olson, as a poet of "light" rather than of "fire." And yet the *Cantos* are not, never could be, "an orderly visualisation"; a multitude of voices—abrupt, lyrical, meditative, raucous—constantly confuses and annoys the visionary.

This is not to imply that the borrowing of scientific terminology so assiduously mapped by Bell was *merely* a diversionary tactic, a device for making public that which seemed to Pound mysterious, arcane and private—though it undoubtedly was one. As Bell puts it, "the precision of science and mysticism belonged to the same order of perception, a perception that sought meaning and value through the objects, the 'things' of the phenomenal world." This is borne out by many of the finest passages in the *Cantos*. And in the grandeur of their conception, the *Cantos* as a whole may well seem a triumph. But no imaginative conception, and no " 'thing' of the phenomenal world", can be given direct, unmediated. The language of Pound's presentation, of his search for meaning and value, has seemed to many, in its terseness and harshness of syntax, its abrupt and "broken" rhythms and the intermittent rawness of its idiom, not just a failure but the breakdown of "poetry" altogether. More than this, the *Cantos* have struck some as an abdication of the artist's responsibilities, rather than the vindication of that exalted sense of them which Pound professed in almost everything he wrote. Yet if he was sometimes misguided, he was not self-deluded, as an artist at any rate; his search was a serious one, as was the more disastrous, and blameworthy, hunger for certainties in the political sphere. In the face of that seriousness, that hunger, "sophistication", to borrow Pound's words, "is not, emphatically is not enough."

KNOWINGNESS IS WORTH even less; yet one or both of these have characterised British dealings with Pound over the years since 1917. Or, on our side, in place of knowingness there has been, tragically (for Pound, since it was England's "rejection" of him that drove him on to Paris, frantic activity, further disillusionment, and into the arms of Mussolini and Fascism; thence to the cage at Pisa, ten years in a ward for the criminally insane, ultimately to Venice and into ten years' silence, and perhaps just as much so for us), suspicion, wilful ignorance, hostility, shallow impatience. An unforgivable state of affairs, one which Donald Davie has been trying to put right for some time—if, on occasion with a note of the pulpit, the evangelist's zeal about him, always with great panache and intelligence. Davie has not ceased from mental fight, and his latest offering is "Six Notes on Ezra Pound" in *Trying to Explain*.[4]

[4] *Trying to Explain*. By DONALD DAVIE. Carcanet, £6.95.

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Apart from a handsome tribute to Charles Olson's "magnanimity and generosity" towards Pound—qualities which caused Pound to write in 1946 from St Elizabeth's, "Olson saved my life"—and to Olson's essay "Granpa, Goodbye", which is brilliantly right for all its "impressionism":

> "His power is a funny thing. There is no question he's got the jump—the wit, the speed of his language, the grab of it, the intimidation of his skilfully-wrought career. But he has little power to compel. . . . One has a strong feeling, coming away from him, of a lack of the amorous, down there somewhere."

—apart from this and a study of "Sicily in the *Cantos*", the central concern of Davie's essays is with the question of Pound's troubled relations with England and the English. I have no doubt that part of the trouble springs from the paradoxes which Olson sums up above, and which have preoccupied me in this review. But it goes beyond these: goes, in fact, as deep as the most regrettable strains of "Englishness." Davie highlights, as all too typical of a common attitude, Beerbohm's famous, none-too-amusing sneer and the cultural attitude it reveals, described by Auden as a "suffocating insular cosiness." Auden's own devastatingly understated censure of Beerbohm's insularity is followed by a warning about the "cultural danger for the English" of a "tendency to judge the arts by the values appropriate to the conduct of family life." For Davie, it implies a more specific indictment—"Is it perhaps true that for many of the English, poetry has never been anything else but a superior parlour-game?" Perhaps. But I do not believe this to be the case among readers and writers of poetry known to me. (Paradoxically, this attitude, or instinctive conviction or whatever, may have had its last great or major representative in Auden himself. Though Auden in later life could claim some very good reasons for holding it, and there are many prepared to claim that Auden was so hugely gifted it hardly mattered anyway, I feel myself that sometimes it mattered too much for us to be entirely happy about it.) However, it can certainly appear to be the case when Pound is under discussion, and the most telling argument—more than a theme in these pieces, almost an obsession—which Davie produces to "explain" this (if anything can explain it) is the profound, enduring sympathy and affection felt by the English for the amateur.

As bodied forth in late-Edwardian London, in figures such as Maurice Hewlett, Laurence Binyon and Henry Newbolt, nothing could have contrasted more sharply with Pound's professionalism, or seemed more frustrating to the Pound who had chosen London as the centre of a new poetry, a new vortex of the arts. Things went disastrously wrong; Pound got himself "taken up", just as

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quickly got himself dropped, and by 1920 was packing up his furniture—wooden furniture and intellectual furniture, all of it home-made, spare and hard of outline, functional, surprisingly durable—and sending it on to Paris. The English never repaid the compliment Pound paid them when he wrote on arrival here that "London, deah ol' Lundon, is the place for poesy."

Strangely enough, it must have seemed the place, in 1908 or 1909. At any rate Pound's connections were made remarkably quickly, and went far deeper than the irrevocable severing of all but one of them (that with his wife, Dorothy) eleven years later might imply. Davie, in "Ezra Pound Abandons the English", catches the unmistakable whiff of wasted possibility and regret that rises from some pages of the *Cantos*: "To watch a while from the tower", "And for that Christmas at Maurie Hewlett's. . . ." Pound came into a world which seemed to promise much more than it could ever perform—at least for him. As Davie points out in "Ezra Among the Edwardians", this world must be conceived as a "privileged élite", in which the "literary intellectual had direct access to the centres of power." That Pound valued this world is beyond doubt—"To have, with decency, knocked/That a Blunt should open." It was as potent to his imagination as that "England" he married, Davie suggests, when he married Dorothy Shakespeare. His contacts with Hewlett and Binyon gave him access to the fringes of it—though he had other contacts: he writes in a letter that he "made his life in London" by visiting Ford and Yeats, and though Yeats too was attracted to the aristocratic ideal of the amateur, Ford provided a formidable counter-influence; Pound was at this time, as Ackroyd puts it, keeping his options open. He closed half of them, and closed the door on himself just when it was on the point of opening up, by associating himself with Lewis and *Blast*. The English, having once been snubbed, never allowed Pound the possibility of entry again, and he would not have wanted it if they had. For there was in the bitterness of Pound's subsequent "writing-off" of England (the point has been made elsewhere, but it is a crucial one) a measure of what had been lost. With Pound, as with D. H. Lawrence, "extremity of revulsion was a measure of intensity of caring."

WHY SHOULD THIS HAVE happened? Davie's suggestion that Pound was seeking an *atelier* (a word which recurs often in this collection, with a special meaning for Davie the champion of creative writing schools), and a *maître* to whom he could apprentice himself, is not particularly convincing; Pound was too much the *maître* himself, and too eager to enlist apprentices to his own *atelier*, for that. It may be that, enjoying himself

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playing the "literary racket", he overplayed his hand, also as Davie suggests. Or it may be that, given the right English reticence, Binyon and the rest could have felt Pound's behaviour and constant "shop-talk" not as a breach of some spurious literary decorum or a violation of good manners but—that much more serious thing—a violation of privacy, a real violation occasioning real discomfort; their pained silence a particularly tactful form of mild reproach which Pound took for rejection. Or again, it may be that rejection was just what Pound *needed*, to keep the fires fuelled.

These last are certainly more germane to the note of petulance, the violent, pointless raging of his *Blast* writings and Vorticist manifestos. In any case he must have felt that he had "had the best" of London; that London had tolerated him, with its bemused and patronising air, for long enough. If London was no longer amused by this "wild man", the "outsider", very well, then, it was time he got himself taken seriously elsewhere. Though Davie does not consider any of this during the course of his admirably lucid, concise and provocative reflections—it goes without saying that they are also profoundly humane, coolly argued, passionately felt—it seems to me from reading them that Pound's departure was due to no dramatic change of heart, but rather a shift of emphasis. And it could be that, to restore what is best about the spirit he instigated in poetry and criticism, this is what is most needed now, in the attitude of the English towards Pound.

In the Vale of Tears

New Fiction—By DOUGLAS DUNN

READING SEVEN NOVELS and one book of stories in a relatively short space of time leads inevitably to a temptation to generalise on the state of fiction. It's a trap I haven't fallen into. On the other hand it struck me forcibly enough that these fictions, or their authors, have several attitudes in common. And what they have in common is a sense of fear, a willingness to convey menace, nastiness, confusion sexual, social and moral, a revulsion before modern life in differing states of extremity and, in some cases, an ability to withhold or exploit an unbeguiling chaos with comedy.

Paul Theroux's last book, *World's End*, was a collection of stories which led me to believe that that well-travelled and clever writer had run out of steam. His new book,[1] though, goes further than reinstate him on my shelf of favourite contemporary writers. It's his best book yet—better than *The Family Arsenal*, *Picture Palace* or *The Consul's File*. Allie Fox, the book's dominant, domineering central character, is a brilliant creation whose get-up-and-go negativity leads the novel to overlap with important psychological types and contemporary desires. Fox is a competent bully, a domestic thug whose outrage at the moral and material topography of the United States forewarns him into a false conviction of the imminence of Apocalypse. He has a fanatic's energy and self-deception, a consuming egoism.

"Trouble, the man says. I don't call a forty-five degree angle trouble, and what's a handful of no-goods? I could have that half-breed pleading for mercy. Fuel shortages, unemployment, moral sneaks in Washington and muggers on every street corner! Kids in grade school sniffing glue, polecats in every pulpit, old lady hoarders, white collar punks, double-figure inflation and a two-dollar loaf of bread. That's what I call trouble. Dead rivers, cities that look like Calcutta—that's trouble for fair. You don't take a walk because you're afraid of getting a shiv in your ribs, so you stay home and they come through the windows. There are homicidal maniacs, ten years old, prowling some neighbourhoods. They go to school! The whole country's bleeding to death—*bleeding*—"

Diagnostically, Fox's graphic splurges of complaint are difficult to dismiss. It's what he does with them which leads to our disagreement and to the novel's extraordinary action. Fox ships himself and his wife and three children off to the Mosquito Coast of Honduras. Narrated by Fox's eldest son, the novel portrays a thwarted Swiss Family Robinson of the self-inflicted shipwreck, a thought which strikes Allie Fox (or Paul Theroux) readily enough. Fox's pristine, lily-white Americanism is renewed in the experience of being a latter-day pioneer. A manic inventor, he brings ice to the jungle via his demonic machine Fat Boy. In his role as a utilitarian exponent of wilderness, a born improver, Fox drives his family with patriachal ruthlessness. His long-suffering wife—a nameless "Mother"—is overshadowed by Fox's cumulative

[1] *The Mosquito Coast*. By PAUL THEROUX. Hamish Hamilton, £7.95.

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selfishness as one disaster follows another. Marvellously characterised, vivid and exciting, it is a novel of compelling excellence, and Theroux's writing has never been better. It should be read as an object lesson by those of the new breed of Simple Lifers intent on putting the clock back even further than Mrs Thatcher's political horologists.

ANOTHER FAMILY which experiences the primitive life is the Smales in Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*.[2] When insurrection breaks out in South Africa, the Smales, thinking they are heading for the coast, find themselves holed up in the village of their servant, July. Comparing this version of hardship and "going native" with Theroux's is to see two extremes in the system of modern life, choice and victimisation. Unlike Allie Fox, who thought anyone with a taste for amenity a "funny-bunny", the Smales know discomfort when it bites them in the night or gets under their fingernails. As well as cause for rethinking their relationship with July—"he turned out to be the chosen one in whose hands their lives were to be held; frog prince, saviour, July"—the Smales's experience leads them to wonder why they, of all people, good liberals, should be subjected to physical and emotional dislocation:

> "They had fled the fighting in the streets, the danger for their children, the necessity to defend their lives in the name of ideals they didn't share in a destroyed white society they didn't believe in."

Instead of straightforward escape, the Smales find themselves in a society regulated by different imperatives than the one they left. Predictably, the experience draws Maureen Smales—from whose point of view the novel is observed—to recapitulate her past life. As a young girl she had been photographed in the street with the family's black servant, Lydia. The picture turned up subsequently in *Life*: ". . . the marvellous photograph of the white schoolgirl and the black woman with the girl's school case on her head. Why had Lydia carried her case?"

Photographic images of Africa recur in the book—as if to compare Africa's unpleasant and complicated reality with the simple visuals European and American magazine readers see in the press or on TV:

> "At this moment in its span, its seasons, the village coincides with the generic moment of the photographer's village, seen from afar, its circles encircled by the landscape, held in the pantheistic hand, the single community of man-and-nature-in-Africa reproduced by skilled photogravure processes in Holland or Switzerland."

Nadine Gordimer's best expositions of Southern Africa's racial tragedies, cruelties and dilemmas are probably to be found in her short stories. But *July's People* has a persistent ring of fear to it, cleverly kept under control, and written with urgency.

MARITAL MENDACITY among the Irish *nouveaux riches* and its impact on Eileen Hughes, an innocent employee of Bernard and Mona McAuley, are the subject of Brian Moore's new novel. Although Moore is more capable than the majority of contemporary novelists in conveying feeling, *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*[3] suffers in comparison with the books by Theroux and Gordimer. It is a matter of language. Moore's prose is as quotidian as his subjects. His descriptive writing is meagre and powerless, a shortcoming partly redeemed by the strength of his dialogue, and his convincing portrayal of female characters.

McAuley is a sexual incompetent, impotent, but in love. His is a queer fate—successful, rich, a show-off and high-liver whose affluence brings him no happiness. Mona, his wife, cruises round London in search of solace while Bernard squires Eileen round the sights of the capital. In one way the book compares Irish Protestant success with the upright morality of a twenty-year-old Irish Catholic woman. "You see", Bernard says to Eileen, confessing his love of money, "not all of us have your moral fortitude." So disagreeable is McAuley, though, that one wonders why a nice girl like Eileen allowed herself to be brought to London in the first place.

Where the story goes really wrong is in the introduction of Earl, a Californian A-&-R man, complete with West Coast moustache and trendy outfit. Never since the History Man's seduction of that sweet, prim Scottish girl have I felt so outraged over a character's stupidity or, for that matter, a novelist's cupidity. I mean, why can't they be English, for a change, or, preferably, American? The Americanisation of Eileen makes Moore's novel look like an exercise in Californian sexual self-congratulation. Well, he lives there. Maybe he's trying to prove himself.

CONJUGAL CHAOS is a common theme in the other books under review, with the exception of Alan Massie's clever, stylish and absorbing third novel, *The Death of Men*.[4] As a study of the psy-

[2] *July's People*. By NADINE GORDIMER. Jonathan Cape, £5.95.

[3] *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*. By BRIAN MOORE. Jonathan Cape, £6.50.

[4] *The Death of Men*. By ALAN MASSIE. Bodley Head, £6.50.

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chology of terrorism, Massie's new book is skilful and serious, particularly in the sections related by Raimundo, a Prufrockian dilettante, a charming cynic, old-world and too elegant ever to be entirely bewildered. It is Raimundo's brother, Corrado Dusa, who is kidnapped along lines that parallel the fate of the unfortunate Aldo Moro. Massie explores this political family with unremitting insight while he is courageous enough to narrate part of the story through the mind of Tomaso, one of the kidnappers—easy enough in a superficial thriller, but, in a novel with obvious literary claims, a demanding area within which to work with any hope of veracity. From time to time, though, the political expositions seem clumsy, as if wedged into the story for the sake of information. "There is no difference between ignorance and wilful innocence", says Christopher, an expatriate English journalist in Rome. Well-balanced aphorisms of that sort litter the book with their provocative meanings, while a good deal of disguised allusiveness adds a touch of long-haired zest to the substance of the writing. The dreadful deceits, footwork, callousness and time-serving of Italian politics are also revealed in all their shameful nakedness. From this performance one can only applaud Massie as perhaps the finest of living Scottish novelists—strong on prose style, which, since Stevenson, has hardly been a Caledonian tendency.

THE MENACE in Ian McEwan's new novel is entirely sexual. Admiring McEwan's writing is one thing—his ability is beyond question—but the subjects which obsess him strike me as absolutely unwholesome. Like Massie's novel, *The Comfort of Strangers*[5] is set in Italy, this time in an unnamed Venice. Short, precise, ingeniously devised and told, it is none the less an exercise in minority sexual behaviour and I don't think I can be the only reader of this novel who found himself in the unwilling role of voyeur of abnormality. As with his other writing, his new book has the virtue of being morally annoying. And yet I don't believe that the people characteristic of his novels and stories exist in any way that makes his writing socially informative. McEwan's novel offers a kind of negative stimulus: it is to read a story about people one would run a mile from. His holidaying couple, and the sinister Venetians who encourage their sexual release, don't strike me as particularly credible. Most of the writing is beautifully taut and conducted with conspicuous skill, but extraordinary gifts, it seems to me, are being squandered in a search for sexual rarities.

If the sensibilities and states of mind of

[5] *The Comfort of Strangers*. By IAN MCEWAN. Jonathan Cape, £5.50.

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McEwan's characters are not those I recognise, much of A. N. Wilson's England is strange to me as well. His dexterous novel *Who Was Oswald Fish?*[6] explores the curious posterity of a Victorian architect and designer. It is a study, both comic and pathetic, of families and interrelationships, of the bizarre weave of English life extending into Europe and the Empire, with its tragedies, ambitions, pettiness, contrasts and extremes, a family saga in shorthand. A nation's unhappiness is expressed in Wilson's book, not only in grief, but in sex, conjugal rage and adultery, and in fallings and risings on the social scale. Wilson is peculiarly adept at mixing the satirical and the pathetic, with the result that the book embodies a curious loathing or bitterness. His picture of Fanny Williams's grim household is all too vivid—why are present-day novelists so interested in, and so good at, depictions of monsters?—while Fanny's children are probably the nastiest of precocious nasties in the fictional record.

But as with McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers*, Wilson's deviously constructed tale, with its gallery of oddballs, kooks and fouled-up trendies, is a bit overdone. It adds up to an impressive curiosity, a slice of comic unreality spiced with tragedies and frustrations. Its final effect is one of overwhelming bleakness—an unsatisfactory past, an unsatisfactory present: even if Wilson has let his material run away with him, in a manner that is admirably energetic but perhaps also irresponsible, the book is well worth reading. Of the crop of younger English novelists, Wilson looks to me the one most likely to deliver the goods.

TRICKY MARRIAGES figure in P. H. Newby's *Feelings Have Changed.*[7] Is bad, mismanaged love a metaphor of British cultural and political decay? Certainly, this simple soul finds it hard to see Newby's Brock Common and his wife, or Max and his wife Jill, or Fred, Fanny and other disgustings in *Who Was Oswald Fish?*, or Moore's Bernard McAuley, or McEwan's Colin and Mary, as little more than representatives of lives gone soft in the head, consumed by selfishness, deracinated and distasteful.

Brock Common is a producer in the late and lamented Features Department of the BBC. Laurence Gilliam, Louis MacNeice and W. H. Auden all appear in the novel, which lends it a misleading savour of faction or documentary. Much of Newby's depiction of the Features Department under threat and of the BBC at a moment of change as television introduces new priorities is probably true. Yet the novel is more a fantasy drawn from real materials, one which dramatises an apparent change in sensibility in the early 1960s—hence, I suppose, the title, although just how generally its significance is meant to be taken is unclear.

"No one was in such pain there was no laughter, though all, from time to time, had strange dreams in which one or two even cried out." That, the last sentence of the book, conveys something of Newby's laconic style as well as his saddened, dispirited attitude to his own creation. Equally well, it sums up his portrayal of lives lived with less than fullness of heart. Behaviour seems regulated by hysterical self-deception in which both squalor and confusion are inevitable consequences. Max and Jill Kettle, for instance, a couple who have suffered the death of their small son, don't so much exist as persist; the reason I find them unconvincing, Max in particular, has a lot to do with Newby's characteristically English form of comic distortion. Secondary characters—such as the horrendous Professor Evadne Lamb, or the genuinely amusing Father Drew—are successfully caricatured. It is when comic exaggeration takes too much on itself that the technique becomes ludicrous and perhaps even grotesque. That manic English infatuation with humour purveys an attitude which warms

[6] *Who Was Oswald Fish?* By A. N. WILSON. Martin Secker & Warburg, £6.95.

[7] *Feelings Have Changed.* By P. H. NEWBY. Faber & Faber, £6.95.

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more quickly to cynicism than it can organise a properly critical compassion.

A WRITER who can move in that terrain of broken marriages and pervasive unhappiness with a true respect for what he shows us is William Trevor. His new collection of stories[8] illustrates proposals, challenges or suggestions which misfire into tragedy. Some of these new tales are peculiarly bleak and menacing, none more so than "The Teddy-Bears' Picnic." A crime, accidental or calculated, is used by an exasperated husband to cure his wife of her childishness (perhaps even her childhood) by complicating it with a guilt of which he can remind her. Trevor has always had a ruthless eye for deceit and dishonesty, but as his writing has matured his observation has deepened in its unswervingly truthful refusals to brighten the lives of his characters. "Being Stolen From" is an especially grim tale. Its unsentimental logic creates an act of acceptance which is in fact a suppression of defiance and the manufacturing of his character's privately defined idea of Fate.

Feeling is less common in new fiction than most of us care to remember. Trevor's "Downstairs at Fitzgerald's" is a haunting and moving story of a young girl's Saturday outings with her divorced father. "Neither of them would ever really know what being together meant", the story ends, "downstairs at Fitzgerald's or anywhere else." It is uncompromising, but the story is such that Trevor makes us feel that is how it would be, that anything less saddening would be a lie.

[8] *Beyond the Pale*. By WILLIAM TREVOR. Bodley Head, £6.95.

Sylvia Plath & Others

New Poetry—By LAURENCE LERNER

THE MOST IMPORTANT BOOK of poetry published this year is Sylvia Plath's *Collected Poems*.[1] "About time too" might be one's first, understandable reaction. It is 19 years since she died, and ten years since the last of the posthumous volumes: now at last everything has been gathered together, and edited with care and tact by Ted Hughes. All good things are worth waiting for, and reading through the volume makes it clear that she was one of the most remarkable poets of her time.

Let us take not one of the really well-known *Ariel* poems, but, to start with, a lesser-known piece that is short enough to be quoted in full. "Mirror" was written in 1961, and published in *Crossing the Water*:

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful—
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.
Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

This is a witty poem in the best sense, not only in the precision of the details, and the verbal sprightliness, but in the amusing self-importance given to the mirror. It is not as wild as, say, "Lady Lazarus" or "Fever 103°": its inventiveness shows no sign of spilling over into free association or surrealism. Yet it implies those other, more disturbing poems, and satisfying as it is in itself, it takes on a deeper resonance in the context of Sylvia Plath's work. Is the woman who bends over the mirror, for instance, to be seen as the author? We cannot say, but if she is, there is an extra irony in knowing that she is not yet 30 when she sees an old woman rising towards her; and the obsessive concern with itself given to the mirror takes on an extra resonance if it echoes the similar obsession in the author of the poem. This poem steps back from the terrible intensity of the experiences of *Ariel* while inviting us to remain

[1] *Collected Poems*. By SYLVIA PLATH. Edited by Ted Hughes. Faber, £10.00, paper £4.25.

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aware of them. I find it an almost perfect poem, stronger for its limitations.

It undercuts at least one popular view of Sylvia Plath, that her early work is controlled, formal, even superficial, and the later poems make true contact with her anxieties, and so are imbued with a new power. There is some truth in this, but it should not be taken too rigidly. Here we have a late poem that gains force from its ability to stand back. True, it does not stand back in quite the same way as the poems of *The Colossus* do. Take "The Spinster", written five years earlier:

Now this particular girl
During a ceremonious April walk
With her latest suitor
Found herself, of a sudden, intolerably struck
By the birds' irregular babel
And the leaves' litter. . . .

What is the difference? Is it just the greater formality of this poem in half-rhymes and regular stanzas? Is it the echo of Auden in the way the half-rhymes are used for sinister effect? There seems to be the same disturbing experience behind it as behind "Mirror": both, in their different ways, keep a superb distance from hysteria.

Yet it is not difficult to find poems in *The Colossus* that would seem at home in *Ariel*—the marvellous "Lorelei", for instance. The fatal lure of a siren's song provides the perfect subject for Sylvia Plath, obsessed as she was with the horrible beauty of dying, and this poem blends its death-wish with a cool awareness of its folly:

Sisters, your song
Bears a burden too weighty
For the whorled ear's listening

Here, in a well-steered country,
Under a balanced ruler. . . .

The impudent assurance of the pun ("well-steered") reminds us of detachment while mocking it slightly: like all her best poetry, it neither surrenders to hysteria nor escapes from it. And the haunting last line ("Stone, stone, ferry me down there") is enriched by the stone-like qualities of the underwater shapes of which we have glimpsed a vision.

OF COURSE in a poetic career that lasted only seven years we would expect continuity. In stressing this, and in praising the control of the early poems, am I suggesting that the great frenetic outbursts which have become so famous are artistically inferior? Some enthusiasts for "confessional poetry" would say at this point, So much the worse for art; but that is a very superficial conception of the relation of art to experience. Artistic success that destroys the living nerve for the sake of an elegant pattern produces only literary exercises, but there is a deeper and more necessary art that seizes the experience and brings it to life in language, involving the reader's emotions, where artlessness might leave him cold and even resentful. It is the miracle of a poem like "Lady Lazarus" that though it seems a wild and incoherent outpouring of terror and self-hatred, it also has the true control of art. Not, this time, through the imposition of any formal metrical pattern, but through the use of repetitions that capture the frenzy of the speaking voice and find a pattern in it, and above all through the deliberate self-dramatisation that presents suicide as a form of role-playing, almost of comedy:

Dying
Is an art like everything else.
I do it exceptionally well.
I do it so it feels like hell.
I do it so it feels real.
I guess you could say I've a call.

That last line can be said with a giggle, as a boast, or as wry self-deprecation, and each implies the possibilities of the other. The poem has deservedly become one of the best-known of our time.

WHEN D. J. ENRIGHT was a boy he read a novel about a youngster who rolled in the dew and caught consumption. He was taken with the dignity of it:

There being no dew available
I soaked my pyjamas under the kitchen tap
And went to bed. After a foul night
I arose from a bed of steam
Exhausted but essentially undamaged.

He too mocks himself, playing the role of the clumsy performer, but how different it is from Sylvia Plath. There is no frenzy here, no real engagement with the urge to die: what amuses him is humanity, and when he writes about himself (which he doesn't often) it is as a specimen of human folly, not as someone in a situation of special intensity.

Enright's *Collected Poems*[2] happen to have come out at the same time as hers. They cover a much longer career, and it makes sense in his case to ask how he has changed over the years. The blurb tells us that his style "has developed from the sensuous and extravagant formalities of some of his early poems into the pared-down referential wit of his later work." Certainly there is a good deal of extravagance in the early poems, sometimes sensuous, often full of enjoyment:

All is flux: waters fall and leap, and bridges leap and fall.

[2] *Collected Poems*. By D. J. ENRIGHT. Oxford University Press, £10.00.

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Even his Tortoise undulates, and his Spring Hat
is lively as a pool of fish.
All he ever saw was sea: a sea of marble
splinters—
Long bright fingers claw across his pages, fjords
and islands and shattered trees—

This is not a Nature poem, but a poem about Hokusai: Enright has never gone in for immediacy, for direct rendering of sensuous experience. The poem is a discussion about art, about why Hokusai's demonic hyena, terrible as it is, is also "present and perfect": "it, at least, knows exactly why it laughs." All the same, there is clearly a richness of enjoyment in this poem that has quite disappeared from the "pared-down wit" of the later work. Take "Small Oratorio":

Let there be pie
In the sky
When I die

In the sky
Let there be pie

There's nothing shameful in my cry!
If not for pie
What purpose in the sky?

On earth
A dearth

Whate'er his worth
That he will die
Man knows from birth

Let there be pie
Why else a sky?

It is a pleasure to think how many abstract nouns could be used to spell out the argument of this largely monosyllabic poem. It is very satisfying, as is so much of the later Enright, but the development has brought loss as well as gain.

There is another change too, which has brought both gain and loss. The tenderness and compassion are often quite explicit in the early poems. "On the Death of a Child" ends:

Indeed, as little as its subject, is the wreath we
give—
The big words fail to fit. Like giant boxes
Round small bodies. Taking up improper room,
Where so much withering is, and so much bloom.

I cannot imagine the later Enright wearing his heart on his sleeve like this, allowing himself (twice!) to use so emotional a construction as "so much" without any ironic undercutting. Enright has a hard crust and a soft inside, like Aunt March in *Little Women*: this brings a double danger to the writing—of sentimentality, when the warm feeling shows through too obviously, or—worse—when

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we are nudged into noticing it, and of easy cynicism, when the surface wit loses all touch with the feeling. As the years progress he has certainly grown wittier, but he has also veered so sharply away from sentimentality that I find myself longing for a few lines like "where so much withering is and so much bloom" to recur. The later wit tends to be more directly verbal:

> *How alchemy shall yield to chemists, aspiration to aspirin,*
> *barbs to barbiturates, aesthetics to anaesthetics, whores to hormones, heroines to heroin. . . .*

A whole poem is made out of a spelling mistake ("abhominable", suggesting that "to man's nature such things ran contrary"), and simple enough moral observations turn into a dazzle of word-play ("Remove the sin from penis and there's not much left").

Enright's relation to literature has always been paradoxical. He hates aestheticism, derivativeness, and writing that is merely parasitic on past achievement: the world is full of human beings, and he wants poetry to be aware of them. But at the same time he is a highly allusive writer, sophisticated and full of witty misquotations: two of his collections, *Paradise Illustrated* and *A Faust Book*, are retellings of the old stories—or rather, not even retellings, but commentaries that assume a knowledge of the original. Sometimes they are not all that far from clever schoolboy wit, sometimes they have an admirable economy. One of the finest seems to me the rendering of Gretchen's song "*Meine Ruh' ist hin*":

> *My stomach is sore,*
> *My peace is fled,*
> *I wish I'd been careful,*
> *I wish I was wed. . . .*

Is Enright just making fun of Gretchen, as he continually does of Faust? To render "*Mein Herz ist schwer*" by "My stomach is sore" might seem like schoolboy humour, but as we read the whole poem, the more explicit references to pregnancy begin to seem like simple updating. Details from the rest of the story are worked ingeniously into the text, making up for the fragmentariness of the whole sequence, and in the end this poem emerges as a free rendering rather than a parody, a genuine rewriting of one of Goethe's most famous lyrics for our century.

Enright is not a poet of the stature of Sylvia Plath: he has none of her marvellous metaphoric inventiveness. But his poems make no claim to be more than they are: if anything, they deceive by their unpretentiousness. This is not a volume to return to over and over, but for sheer interest it is more worth reading than most poetry now being written.

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CRAIG RAINE HAS GIVEN US the very opposite to a *Collected Poems*—six poems, beautifully produced by the Salamander Press in a slim volume.[3] Because I consider him the most exciting new poet of the decade, the booklet is well worth absorbing and discussing. His talent for seeing the world anew by means of a precise image is as fine as ever: he watches a man rowing "knit / with clumsy oars, / While the waves / unravel their length", and the circus giraffe "manipulates its jib / like an Anglepoise / awkwardly precise." In this group of poems he has settled to a fixed rhythmic pattern, three-line stanzas—or hardly stanzas, rather breath-groups—with no rhyme and no metrical regularity: an easy-going movement into which the poems fit comfortably. Perhaps too comfortably: one hopes he will begin to experiment in metre in a way that will match his experiments in metaphor.

Unsympathetic readers of Raine's poetry ask if his poems add up to anything more than a patchwork of descriptive *aperçus*. The answer, I am sure, is yes: "The Widower", the first poem in this book,

[3] *A Free Translation*. By CRAIG RAINE. Salamander Press, £4.50, paper £2.00.

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has the usual brilliant metaphors, but it is also deeply moving in its presentation of the speaker's feelings:

I pat the solid sand
until it liquifies

beneath my foot,
reminding me
of how the world

was turned to water
by the candle flame
beside her coffin,

how a crucifix
shuddered
and stonework drowned

as the priest looked on
with midnight hands
at ten in the morning.

Could grief be more powerfully rendered than that? My only problem with this poem is being sure I have understood what is happening as it moves between first and third person. I take the first-person statements to come from the widower himself, and read the poem as having only one person in it, but the absence of quotation marks makes it impossible to be sure of this. In some of the other poems, the difficulty is greater. Like a true modernist, Raine does not tell us what the situation is, and when we are moving from one speaker to another. The argument for such a method is of course that what we lose is only the prose structure, which a poem is finer and more suggestive for breaking free of; but I find that the information withheld from us is sometimes crucial to the receiving of the poem. "The Season in Scarborough 1923" is a wonderful account of the life of the rich as seen by a servant, ending with the poet himself sitting "on the train/to literary London" thinking of her "the day she packed/suddenly homesick/for the real. . . ." Now what is the relation between the poet and the servant? Is it a stranger he happens to know about, or someone he has made up to write a poem about her, or (for instance) his mother? I would like to know this, but I must admit I can see the case for not being told. A more clear-cut case of needing to know is provided by "The Man who Invented Pain", which asks us to imagine how a firing squad in the morning turns the rest of the day into a kind of Sunday for the soldiers, and in this it succeeds brilliantly. But it is introduced with six stanzas about the "he" of the poem—presumably the man they shot—which come so tantalisingly close to telling his story that I feel simply teased at not knowing more. Perhaps Raine wishes to tease me. I can see it would be against the spirit of his poems to offer any but the necessary minimum of

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explanation; sometimes, for my taste, he drops below the minimum.

ANDREW WATERMAN's *Out for the Elements*[4] begins as follows:

Starry tonight, and repetitious
Sea harassing the empty strand,
As when it first cast adventitious
Staggering life upon the land;
Through sleights of wondrous generation
Since to attain a consummation
In filaments of light I see
Stacked on the Prom: humanity
With all its complex apparatus,
Deep-freezers, televisions, cars,
Banks, supermarkets, churches, bars,
Shows what once kindled to create us
Subtilised now to a weird grace—
Note shimmering on time and space.

Most of the strengths and limitations of the whole are already present in this first stanza. Clearly we are in for a long reflection on modern man. It is a promising opening: the casual scene-setting of the first two words ("I could be Romantic if I wanted to"), the well-chosen adjectives for the sea, the neat wit of "sleights." Will he be able to keep it up? Before the stanza is over, I can see him flagging: "complex" is rather predictable, "shows" is clumsy.

Out for the Elements shot its author to fame this year by winning second prize in the *Observer*/Arvon poetry competition. That the prize should go to a long autobiographical poem of over 2,000 lines arouses admiration, though one wonders whether it is for the author who wrote it or the judges who showed their stamina by choosing it. The poem is in the sonnet-stanza used by Pushkin in *Eugene Onegin*, which must have struck a chord in our time, since John Fuller wrote even more of them in *The Illusionists* last year. Now that we have the full text of the poem, it can at least be said that it makes a good read. If (as one suspects) the *persona* of the poem is very close to the author himself, then he certainly has the attraction of frankness. A school drop-out, moving from job to job and from woman to woman until he settles into an academic niche in Coleraine, he is given a year off which he spends in Manchester writing *Out for the Elements*. It is full of his likes and dislikes (he is a loner, and takes to other loners), his views on Northern Ireland (some Republican leanings), his failed marriages, his memories of trivial moments of happiness and longer spells of discontent. Its style of intelligent conversation in verse belongs in the tradition of Auden, but seldom rises to Auden's mastery.

Here is a good passage:

Not that the Bomb and concentration
camps make us really worse than when,
horseback with no administration,
Attila ravaged Europe. Then
we weren't so dangerously efficient
at evil, that's all.

I believe that to be true, and would nod in agreement if I read it in prose. What does the verse add? Succinctness, memorableness, controlled shift in tone—rhetorical devices for driving home a point already made, rather than creative devices for discovering what you're saying. This is what is meant by asserting that it is verse not poetry, but good verse ought not to be underrated: "horse back with no adminstration" is just right, and the rhyme drives it home. There is quite a lot of writing like this, though not enough to make the whole poem a triumph, and many of the good stanzas have weak endings.

FOR SHORT POEMS I prefer Douglas Dunn[5] to Waterman. They have something in common—intelligent extraverts looking at the world around them as well as their own feelings, at the past as well as the present. But Waterman has neither Dunn's rich sense of history, nor his verbal felicity. Dunn's skill is most immediately striking in some of the short poems on everyday subjects, which I found the best way into his volume. Some of these are sober, intelligent, controlled, like a good poem of the Fifties ("The Gallery" could easily be an early Donald Davie); some are fun, like "Ratatouille"; and some have images that ought to convert one instantly to admiration for his skill. "Second-hand Clothes", for instance, sparkles from the first moment (if sparkle is the word for so drab a subject):

A girl anoints a dress
With four silver coins.
Hands rinse among textiles,
Encountering others' skins.

[4] *Out for the Elements*. By ANDREW WATERMAN. Carcanet, £3.95.

[5] *St Kilda's Parliament*. By DOUGLAS DUNN. Faber, £3.00.

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Held up, observed for rips,
For their proximities
To new, to cleanliness,
To fit, their owners are
A hearsay of shapes. . . .

Who could improve on that verb "rinse", or on that final image? The poem does its best to keep up the sparkle, till it turns to moralising ("I walk home/ A suitably ashamed / Observer of the poor"), and after some rather explicit reflections culminates in a terse and frightening image:

When I got home, I crawled
Into my mouth. . . .

Douglas Dunn can write, and there is nothing slovenly in this volume, but for me that did not make it an unqualified success. Some of the longer poems (like "Remembering Lunch") outstay their interest, and some of the volume requires an interest in Scotland that not every reader will bring to it. The best of the poems will, of course, create this, and two at least left me grateful to have been taken into a culture that clearly means everything to the poet. One is the title poem, in which the photographer who took a picture of St Kilda's parliament in 1879 is conjured back from the dead to revisit the now deserted island a hundred years later. The language has none of the brilliance of "Second-hand Clothes", but its slow, cumulative blank-verse meditation grows more impressive as it builds up to a picture not only of St Kilda but of the outside world it was scarcely aware of. The other is "Green Breeks", a reflection on an anecdote from Scott's memoirs, written in elaborate formal stanzas. Green Breeks was the leader of a gang of poor boys who used to gather and taunt the children of George's Square, Edinburgh. Dunn quotes Scott's mock-heroic description of the battles, and as the poem proceeds Green Breeks becomes a symbol of the Scotland which Scott subdued into "the quick-lime of your ordered literature", and Scott, with his "love of 'haves', amusement at 'have-nots' " is urged to do what he never did in life, accept Green Breeks for what he really is. It is an impressive historical statement, respecting the Scott it castigates; there is no touch of modernism about it, and it reads as if it could have been written at any time since the episode it narrates. This seems wholly appropriate for such a poem. I feel less enthusiastic about "John Wilson in Greenock 1786", a long monologue by a school master who had had to sign a bond promising to give up "the profane and unprofitable art of poem making", which, despite its attractive subject, reconstructs the past rather more painstakingly. In contrast, there is the totally contemporary setting of poems like "The Local", full of powerful detail, though it left me a little uncertain what the effect of the whole is:

Instead, we stand
In this armpit of English vernacular
Hopelessly in touch with where we are.

Dunn is in touch with where we are, and if it is not hopeless, this is largely because of the enlarging effect of the concern with Scotland, that he feels he has left behind in both time and place. Not all of *St Kilda's Parliament* kindles into poetry, but it is a book that (so far) has improved on acquaintance, and may continue to.

The Disposing of Noble Lives

A disposal problem: Mrs Carmichael must go.
Her bed on H5 is required. Some place must be found
For a plump, pink old lady who wanders a bit in her mind,
Who is ambulant, continent, able to dress and climb stairs.
I inspect all the homes in our area. Each home says no.
They are full, chock-a-block. Lost old ladies are thick on the ground,
Two a penny, a glut on the market. Each Matron is kind,
So it seems, and polite and efficient. Each Matron despairs,
Showing room after room of old ladies tucked into armchairs,
Old ladies in beds and in baths, propped on walking-frames, blind,
Asleep on commodes, spoon-fed as they doze, settled round
Switched-off television. In a shabby and crumpled front row
Of fumblers and mumblers, one woman's awake: "I always
Wanted to lead a noble life", she says.

Ruth Silcock

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INTERVIEW

Dangerous Manuscripts

A Conversation with REINALDO ARENAS

AMONG the 125,000 "deviants", madmen, thieves or murderers that Fidel Castro set sailing to the American coast in 1980, there was also a well-known younger writer—37 years old, not very tall, with a boxer's nose and a peasant's hands, whose reputation had already spread far outside the frontier of Cuba. Reinaldo Arenas became the infant prodigy of Cuban literature when at the age of 23 he published *The Well*, a novel which introduced him as the poet and spokesman for the damned of the Cuban earth, in the days of the Batista dictatorship. His later books, *Hallucinations* and *The Palace of the Very White Skunks*, brought him world-wide recognition.

But the wheel had turned, and he was out of favour with the powers that be. From then on he was to be published everywhere except in his own country, where Castroism had him marked down for the treatment accorded to writers who do not toe the official line. State Security confiscated his manuscripts and put him in prison. He emerged because he made the necessary accommodation—he is no "hero", he readily agrees. In New York, where he now lives in a dilapidated apartment block, Reinaldo Arenas has just written again the autobiographical novel—*Once More the Sea*—filched from him by the police. One wonders how Fidel Castro can retain so much prestige in the Third World when the Havana police-state consistently behaves in this way. Perhaps precisely because of such peremptory behaviour—after all, Castro's total power, safely ensconced now for more than twenty years, is for a would-be Líder Máximo anywhere in Africa or Asia not unenviable.

This interview was conducted in New York by F.-O. Giesbert, a correspondent of the *Nouvel Observateur*. Reinaldo Arenas' *El Mundo alucinante* (Mexico, 1966) was published in French translation by Editions du Seuil (*Le Monde hallucinant*, 1970), and in English by Jonathan Cape and Harper & Row (*Hallucinations*, 1971; Penguin edition, 1976).

HOW DOES Reagan's America strike a Cuban dissident?

ARENAS: Me, a dissident?

—You did get out of Cuba.

ARENAS: That's true, I got out of Castro's paradise along with 125,000 other people. But was there a single dissident among us? That remains to be shown. . . .

—Let's not quibble.

ARENAS: I was no more or less a dissident than any writer is.

—Isn't any writer a potential dissident?

ARENAS: Maybe. But I'm no political militant, anything but. I'm no Kravchenko.

—Then why did you leave Cuba?

ARENAS: Quite simply, because I was a writer; and a homosexual too, which didn't help.

—How has it affected you to be suddenly deposited in New York?

ARENAS: I love this town, and it's much more cosmopolitan than it is American. It's marvellous to be able to melt into the crowd. But the "American dream" I've woken up to is fairly mind-boggling for somebody in my position, coming from a system where all the decisions are made for you. For twenty years or more it was the State that fed my belly and stuffed my head. I was its slave really, like the whole Cuban nation. That has its drawbacks, but there are also advantages—there you can let things slide, not in America. Here you have to get a grip on yourself, otherwise you'll be carried away. So I'm learning how to choose, and refuse, and how to struggle. Not so easy.

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—You arrived on the Florida coast with all the "dregs" of Cuban society—what they called "the flotilla." Were you all alone with just a suitcase, like someone out of an old newsreel?

ARENAS: No suitcase—and just dressed in pyjamas. Because I was in bed when the police came looking for me to take me to the boat. It happened very fast, and I had to leave all my manuscripts behind—naturally they were confiscated. When I set foot on American soil on 5 May 1980, all I had in the world was one spare shirt.

—You were one of the few writers who managed to get out last year. Why was that?

ARENAS: Because I had admitted my "errors", and so the régime considered me a broken reed. It's true I'm no hero. Nothing like a man like Armando Valladares, for instance.

—Who is he?

ARENAS: The poet Armando Valladares has been in jail since 27 December 1960, and he's been treated so brutally that he is now paralysed in both legs. He refused to submit to his jailers' "rehabilitation plan", and even dared to go on writing. There's something of the Spanish Inquisition in Castroism—the heretics must always retract, you know. I admire the ones who resist by refusing to say their *mea culpa*. Frankly, I didn't have the nerve.

—But you had enough nerve to go into exile.

ARENAS: Along with the poets Reinaldo Garcia and Roberto Valero, I was one of the first who asked to leave last year when the régime started its spring-cleaning. As a matter of fact I'd been trying for years to get out. As a writer I often used to get invitations to go to France or other countries. When I saw that Castro was letting his "social deviants" play truant, I immediately rushed down to the commissariat of police and showed them my identity book. Everybody has one over there—it contains your entire life story, in great detail. The cops saw that I was "anti-social" and that I'd been in prison—in other words I was a piece of genuine "garbage", suitable for dumping on to the American mainland. Two days later they shoved me on board an old hulk leaving for Florida. I don't mind admitting that my heart was in my mouth all through the crossing. They'd split the leavers into three groups—detainees, the mentally ill, and "misfits" of my kind. They had things arranged so that every sailing contained a third of each category. The boat itself was falling apart. Still, we made it. It was after I left that the government took its precautions to prevent "*déclassé* intellectuals" from bolting.

—Is it because you were a "déclassé intellectual" that you were kept mouldering in Castro's prisons from 1974 till 1976?

ARENAS: Literature is a very dangerous activity over there. I published three novels abroad—particularly in France and the United States—because they had been rejected by Cuba's only publishing house, the Union of Writers and Artists. Crime number one. And I occasionally held little get-togethers, strictly literary, where my friends and I would read some "work in progress." Crime number two.

—Are you saying that you were imprisoned solely for those two reasons?

ARENAS: Not those alone; actually there's a whole context to the thing. My second book, *Hallucinations*, could be interpreted as some sort of act of resistance, but it wasn't specially getting at Castroism. It even received honourable mention in the National Literature Competition in 1966. The truth is that in Cuba the writer always has to think the correct thoughts, and scrupulously follow the directives of the Communist Party. If he doesn't, he's persecuted. I myself have never gone in for any particular political activities, and my origins are not the least bit suspect. I'm a peasant—a genuine little peasant with horny hands who believed in the Revolution. Frankly, I've come round a bit since then. And when they did get round to arresting me, it wasn't because I was fighting against the régime, but because I had no respect for the rules of the official literature or of conventional morality.

WHAT HAPPENED when they arrested you?

ARENAS: It was while I was sitting on a beach with some friends, reading a manuscript. The previous day, my lawyer had told me that my case was hopeless: the police had a stainless steel dossier on me. It was all there—every least action for the last few years, almost to the minute. At that time I was married. Well, State Security had in their files even the poems and one play that my wife had written.

—What was the indictment?

ARENAS: On the lines of "Homosexual . . . and Enemy of the Revolution."

—Is that a serious crime, homosexuality?

ARENAS: Very serious. But there's a whole compendium of crimes in the field of public morality. In Cuba, for instance, it isn't a good idea for lovers to kiss on public benches. It happens, but it's risky . . . they call that sort of thing "public scandal." The police will ask a man whether it really is his wife he's kissing. If it isn't, he's in trouble. Wearing your shirt open is also very much frowned on. And it's

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all perfectly logical: tyrannies are always hypermoralistic because love and sex are expressions of freedom—so they have to be got rid of.

—What is it like to be a homosexual in Cuba today?

ARENAS: An outsider in danger. Because Castroism is really a very *macho* system, and it has taken over the most reactionary prejudices of old Spanish morality. Cuba is ruled by bourgeois types of the kill-joy persuasion, and they've written all of their ancestors' little hang-ups into the law. So you get a law like the one called "*peligrosida*", which defines everything which may be "harmful" to society. Homosexuality and prostitution fall into this category, adultery too; and a taste for American pop music as well. And the régime isn't kidding. I had a friend who fixed up a receiver to listen to radio stations broadcasting from the United States. Six years inside.

Castroist legislation is thoroughly repressive in its morality. Homosexuals are supposed to be "re-educated", which means that they can sometimes be sent far away from the towns, on forced labour. They can't go to university; artistic careers in the cinema or the theatre are closed to them. Castro himself put it very clearly: "It is not permissible that homosexuals, in spite of their artistic qualities or reputation, should have influence over the cultural upbringing of the young."

—But you yourself did have a job?

ARENAS: Until my arrest, yes, I did. I was a reviewer for an official monthly literary magazine, the *Gazeta de Cuba*.

—How did your stretch in jail turn out?

ARENAS: First of all I spent four or five months in a small windowless cell in a State Security prison. I lived there alone and deprived of all rights, like many other Cuban detainees. No lawyer and no visitors. If you don't confess, there's a chance you'll never get out. You can be tortured too; for instance, they'll shut you in a room and feed steam in till you pass out. So eventually I just quit and signed, and then I was transferred to El Morro—a 16th-century fortress built by the Spaniards, overlooking the port of Havana. It was Batista's big prison once, and now it is Castro's. I was in an enormous room with more than 300 people crammed into it. There are seventeen such chambers. For a lavatory we had a little hole where you generally had to queue. There was no air, the floor was caked with filth, and there were also rats, tarantulas and fleas.

TELL ME ABOUT an ordinary day in El Morro.

ARENAS: The light is kept on all the time, and there's a hellish roar of sound, constantly. Often brawls break out between detainees. We had nothing to do, in fact, and not much to eat, but the prisoners could be pretty ingenious, like the one who tied a hook on the end of a piece of cotton, stuck on a lump of bread, and flicked it out through a loophole. He was catching birds. I set up as a public scribe, and everybody came to dictate their tale to me. I met a lot of really good people there, and you'll see them in the books I'm going to write, I think.

—After the penitentiary, you were sent to a "rehabilitation camp"....

ARENAS: Concentration camp is more like it. It was called *Reparto Flores* (the flower quarter). We were building houses for the Russians. There are plenty of camps like that, in Cuba. They always have tasteless names like "New Dawn", or "Free America." You can't help being reminded of the mentality behind that Nazi slogan for labour camps—*Arbeit macht frei*. Work didn't make me free though, because they could sweat us as long as they liked—a work day might be fifteen to eighteen hours long—and we had to recite Castro every morning. That wasn't the softest job, believe me. Everybody stood there with a copy of the Head-of-State's latest speech: and he seems to make one practically every day.

One day a young prisoner refused to read the Gospel According to Castro–he was a Jehovah's Witness. The warders laid into him with boots and gun-butts, and left him for dead on the ground. The next man—he was another Jehovah's Witness—gave way in tears. That was the kind of humiliation they inflicted on us. We were on a strict diet of daily "socialist" prayers. But even the man in the street is obliged to recite his thanksgiving to the great man, you know—at least once a week.

—How is that done?

ARENAS: Through what they call the "study circle." The Committee for the Defence of the Revolution (CDR) calls a weekly meeting for the local people to say their Castro. It usually happens on a Wednesday, and if you skip your lesson, they make trouble for you. For instance, if you want to buy a transistor radio, you need authorisation from the Committee. Absentees or truants don't get it.

—Did you still go to the "study circle" after doing your tour of the Cuban jails?

ARENAS: Of course. It's very much in your interest to be in these people's good books, because they can mess up your life. They have all sorts of powers over you. In your building, for instance, there is always a concierge who keeps an eye on everything, what time you go out, when you come back. You can't hide anything from your concierge; and that is how the Committee becomes the master in your own house. You need its permission

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A Cuban Lesson—By Heberto Padilla

New York

PEOPLE *often ask me about my impressions of New York City, returning as I have after a 20-year absence.*

I understand their curiosity, since during that period I lived not only in my native Cuba, but also in Moscow, Prague, Budapest and Warsaw—either as official correspondent for the Cuban press or as representative of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. After trying to answer their enquiries, I note that they prefer complicated explanations to simple answers.

During the last 20 years, I lived in a world made up of ideas painted in black and white. Everything that came from the United States was anathema—a product of Imperialism. Not even the TV broadcasts of the landing of the first man on the moon were available to Cuban audiences. This sense of things black and white is implacable, and extends to every terrain of human endeavor.

IN CULTURAL RELATIONS, it takes on inconceivable dimensions. In Cuba, any Latin American writer who accepts an award or scholarship from a United States foundation is defined "objectively" as a collaborator with Imperialism. The Peruvian novelist Mario Vargas Llosa, opposing such simplistic pigeonholes, has undergone all sorts of attacks, and his books have been removed from all Cuban libraries.

The Argentine novelist Julio Cortazar has lavished praise on every political line taken by the Revolution; nonetheless, at least up to the date of my departure, few of his books were in circulation—one of his recent novels is considered an utter libel against progressive ideas. The books of the Mexican novelist Carlos Fuentes are not available. The political directorate has deduced, objectively of course, that he is supported by imperialist institutions and that his criticisms of the empire's foreign policy are peripheral.

COMING BACK TO New York after 20 years I do feel strangely empty. Not only am I incapable of taking any slogan seriously, but I feel betrayed by many intellectuals who, I once thought, were our sages, our moral superiors. The theoretical model proposed by Marx and Engels seems to me now a fatal determinism, as repugnant as the Absolute Ideal of Hegel, which ended by sanctioning Napoleon and the Prussian state.

The 19th-century Socialist utopias now seem to me precursors of the forced-labor camps and the ideal City of Man in which the New Man was to be created. Their works seem to me now like luxuriant verbal constructions, no less distant from reality than those of the Socialist thinkers Georg Lukacs, Herbert Marcuse and Theodor Adorno: empty Scholasticism.

Communism is no longer the exemplary challenge of our epoch. Rather, it is the ugly summation of everything that has been and is. For example, we now know that the situation in Poland does not illustrate a democratic development of Socialism. What has happened is that the living organism of Poland has rejected the alien Socialist system, just as transplanted kidneys and hearts get rejected by the body. It makes no difference that this rejection had not found its language. In the Communist world, the language of political struggle is always clandestine, by definition. What counts is where the political events are heading, not the language with which these events are described. A new language will force itself into being.

OVER THE LAST 20 *years, I have lived in countries where the official and also the unofficial language of the Left is in a state of sclerosis. It is nauseating to see such language pretend to cover up unpredicted facts. I am so sick of these slogans that in my most perverse moods I am even tempted to think that the opinions of the most blatant conservatives seem more coherent than those of the messianic leftist reformers.*

I love to walk around the cottage campuses in the Northeast. As I go through the halls of New York University and look around the campus at Princeton, where so many scholars, exiled by the vicissitudes of our time, have worked and lived, I am struck by something that will be obvious to all Americans: No one, government official or colleague, has asked me what I was going to say in the seminars and courses that I am going to give this fall. This is new for me. Simple, but true. It is difficult to ask anyone born into freedom to realize exactly what she or he possesses.

IN 1960, I WANDERED *through the streets of New York, this city which exalted and fulfilled the self that I was then. At that time, I couldn't even imagine a freedom as invisible, dependable and natural as the air. But during the last 20 years, I have lived in frightening laboratories of social experimentation, spaces walled by test tubes where the same experiment always ended with the same chemical result: Tyranny. I have learned something about the value that is freedom. Perhaps no one in the United States will ever have to go through my kind of apprenticeship, and never have the need to learn the lesson I now know.*

HEBERTO PADILLA, *who was exiled from Cuba in March, 1980, is author of "Legacies: Selected Poems", to be published in January by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. His article appeared in "The International Herald Tribune" (Zurich).*

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to have a friend or relation to stay with you; you have to buy the forms, fill them in, and then hand them over to the proper authority. And your guest will have to produce his identity book and get it stamped. It's an absolute tangle every time you want to have a little get-together . . . even to make music, even for a family reunion. I lived in Havana. Well, each time I wanted to see my family, at the opposite end of the island, I had to negotiate a whole cordon of red tape and bureaucratic procedure.

—Where are your personal roots?

ARENAS: In Oriente province, a little village miles from anywhere. My grandparents and my mother are sun-burned peasants—scholars of the things of nature, who grow maize and rear livestock. They taught me the magic of trees, herbs and spices. It was while going to draw water from the well that I started dreaming up stories or making songs. I had the time: the well was a long way from our house. In my family we have always been very poor, desperately poor.

IN THE LATE 1950s, you were a Castroist then?

ARENAS: Yes, because I fought against Batista, like all the peasants. At fourteen I had joined the resistance, in the Velazco region. But I was a guerrilla without a revolver, because of my age; and my role amounted to doing the cooking and washing for the fighting men. Occasionally I would act as a guide in the mountains. I don't want to look as if I'm rewriting history, but it seems to me that in those days the people were against the tyrant in power, rather than in favour of Fidel Castro. And it was the people who brought down the last régime. Don't forget that when Batista gave up and fled, Castro and his men were still hiding in the Sierra—he didn't come down from his mountain-top till a few days afterwards, when it was all over. And that is how one dictatorship replaced another.

—All the same, surely this one isn't worse than the last?

ARENAS: It is. This dictatorship is total, systematic, scientific. Some tyrannies leave little chinks of social space where some freedom can slip between. Not Castroism. Everything is monitored in Cuba: your house, your street, your workplace.

—The régime still gave you your education.

ARENAS: True. Like all the young peasants, I believed that the Revolution would be a tremendous cultural liberation. I studied accountancy and worked on a collective farm, and I devoured all the books I could lay my hands on—my first literary excitement was, I remember, Pablo Neruda.

—You, the peasant, may also want to concede that this system has put food in the mouths of the small farmers.

ARENAS: I'm not so sure. It seems to me more as if they're still starving to death, still as wretched as ever. The difference is that the foreign press is no longer in a position to know about it, because it can't see what people would be eager to disclose. The régime has taken their land away from the small peasants, and Cuba has turned into one big farm—less productive, naturally—where everything really belongs to Fidel Castro. He jumps into his helicopter, looks at the fields, and issues his orders: "Plant me some sugar-cane here—cut down those palm-trees there." And the result is that the island is just a huge plantation in a shambles, where in the end the people haven't got any more bread than they've got freedom. Because nothing has really changed. Nothing. Batista's private beach, the Miramar Yacht Club, still hasn't been opened to the public, for example.

—Why not?

ARENAS: Because it's reserved for Castro's leadership élite, that's why not!

—Are there still executions?

ARENAS: A lot of people "disappear" in prison, much as in Argentina. In Havana we have a custom that goes back to the Spanish era: every night, at nine o'clock, a nine-gun salute is sounded to tell everybody it's time for bed. They say on the grapevine that that's when the executions are held, in the penitentiaries. The sound of the salute, they say, drowns the sound of the execution squad. There's no proof that the rumour is true, but I think it's plausible.

—Would they also kill the "politicals"?

ARENAS: Obviously. Anyway, it's sometimes awkward to distinguish between them and the "common law" criminals: there are more politicals than people think. After all, if you take a stroll with your shirt unbuttoned in Cuba, isn't that basically a political gesture?

—Wouldn't you say this régime has some extenuating circumstances, being so much under pressure from the United States?

ARENAS: No. If the United States had really wanted to overthrow Castro they would have done it long ago. As a matter of fact I wonder whether, in a way, it doesn't suit them. It's a kind of vaccine for Latin America. Who could possibly want to imitate a country that is on its last legs economically, and sold its national independence to the Kremlin? It makes an ideal warning sign.

—What do you think of Castro?

ARENAS: There's a Napoleonic spirit about him, but he isn't really a Bonaparte. Just a Narcissus of

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the mass-media age. . . . When he came into government he announced that he'd "soon" get out—that was 22 years ago. And still he hangs on as always, with his delusions of grandeur and his lust for power. Domestically speaking, his experiment has been a fiasco: and it's the Russians who are propping up the Cuban economy, with a subsidy of at least five million pounds a day.

—Wasn't it the Americans' own policy that threw Castro into the Soviet camp?

ARENAS: It is a deliberate choice on Castro's part. The United States don't lose sleep about supporting right-wing dictatorships, it's true, and they detest the left-wing ones. But they would have taken a much more friendly line if the great *Lider Máximo* had joined the non-aligned countries—the genuinely non-aligned ones. Only that wasn't Castro's plan: he'd lost all idea of bringing our island liberty, equality and fraternity, even though it was possible to think so in his first few years. In fact his ambition was to become a world-famous figure, and the Soviet Union was ready to support him. It enabled the Cuban army to send an expeditionary force of tens of thousands of soldiers into Africa, and it made Cuba a rather impressive military fortress. If Fidel Castro hadn't made a present of himself and his country to the USSR, he wouldn't have the weight and influence he has today.

—Are the Cubans proud of their international role in Africa?

ARENAS: You know, wars are often made as a sop to hungry people.

Do Cubans readily accept the some tens of thousands of Eastern-bloc advisers who live in their country?

ARENAS: The Russians and their allies live totally apart from Cuban society. They don't live with us. They have their private beaches, their exclusive shops, special buses, and needless to say, all kinds of privileges. In Cuba we call them *bolos*—hayseeds. We say they smell bad, and there's a continual flow of anti-Soviet stories. For instance: "A big tombola session is organised. First prize: a week in the Soviet Union. Second prize: three months." Before watching television at night, people ask: "Is it a good film, or is it Russian?" Apparently the graft hasn't taken. When a cinema is showing a Russian film, no one goes—even if it's a masterpiece. But as soon as they advertise an American film, they're packed. Not long ago the government decided to show *King Kong*, after a big press campaign against its "cretinism." The film was a smash hit. That's one country where the American model is wearing well.

—What do you think of cultural activities in Cuba, apart from the showing of Soviet films?

ARENAS: Culture is really nothing but bourgeois art now. They publish all the novels that were in vogue in Franco Spain, for example—from Paul Bourget to the usual old Spanish type, with stories about women totally devoted to their husbands—you know the sort of thing.

—Are the cultural establishment all prudes, then?

ARENAS: Exactly. In Cuba, I'll say it again, the entire superstructure is in the hands of a bourgeoisie. And this is no advanced liberal bourgeoisie—it is totally reactionary. So the congresses on education and culture are all completely surrealistic. Everybody wears the same strict dress, and even long hair is forbidden. The Castroists have, actually, a real poor-white mentality. Do you know what category of Cubans is getting the worst treatment nowadays? The blacks. It's no accident that they always do the dirty jobs, cut the sugar-cane and fill the prisons. Every time the police do a street check, they always start by arresting the blacks with no questions asked. In other words, with Castro you'd better not be "different"—meaning a black, or a prostitute, or a hippie, or a homosexual, or an intellectual.

—Or a novelist?

ARENAS: Then you become a potential condemned man. First you have to struggle, like all Cubans, inside a totally bureaucratic world. It is always in the right. That is how I came to have all my work published abroad—where I had never set foot! Yet in Cuba nothing came out. The publishing machinery is implacable. The Union of Cuban Artists & Writers—for which I worked—issues a favourable or unfavourable verdict on the publication of your manuscript. Then the Ministry of Culture has the final word, and there is no appeal. The minister there is Alfredo Guevara, who is very bright and very personable, and covers up for all of Castro's exactions. In fact he has put his charm into the service of repression. To complicate things further, he's probably a homosexual himself; they use him to sell the Cuban cultural image abroad, and he excels in that. He has managed to hide his devil behind a sweet angelic smile.

—Do you say that because he refused to publish two of your novels, and they've been published everywhere but Cuba?

ARENAS: I say it because Guevara is one of the people who are doing their utmost to banish art from Cuba. So many despotisms have perished from touching it! Well, Castroism is not going to take that chance, that much is clear. Because writers are supposed to spread ideas—and for ideologues, there's nothing more dangerous than new ideas—they are to be Public Enemy Number

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One. They must be watched night and day; their manuscripts must be ceaselessly confiscated. Some time before I left, for example, I wrote a text which I hid in a plastic bag, under a tiled floor in my house. One day it vanished.

—You must get paranoid pretty quickly when you work in conditions like that, don't you?

ARENAS: Extra careful, more like. Between two fits of discouragement, I used to try to memorise all my works, because the police make off with anything that's unlucky enough to be written down.

—Even poems where the sky is blue and the sea is tranquil?

ARENAS: Even that. Everything is disappearing. For instance, Cuba had one fine writer, Virgilio Pineira, who at the end of his life had completed several novels and a few plays—but naturally it hadn't been possible to publish anything. When he died, two years ago, the police seized all his manuscripts. Ten years of work wiped out at a stroke.

—What could upset the régime in a few pages of pastoral verse?

ARENAS: The fact that they are not written in praise of the régime. That is called "ideological deviationism", and it's a crime. If you don't touch your forelock to the system, it's because you have subversive motives.

—What about foreign writers who are banned?

ARENAS: We always suffer by comparison with writers who are either foreign or dead-and-gone. Because what they write can't possibly be interpreted as attacking the system. But the Castro censorship keeps a long pair of scissors. In the National Library's section of books forbidden to the public there are even Pablo Neruda's Memoirs, and books by Sartre, Carlos Fuentes, and Borges. But it gets worse: once I helped somebody to stage *La Celestina*, a picaresque piece by Fernando de Rojas and a great classic of Spanish literature. Even the Inquisition didn't stop it being published. Well, the play was banned in Cuba. Why? Because one of the characters is a tart. Torquemada was less squeamish than Castro.

—Did the police take many manuscripts of yours?

ARENAS: Some poems, some short stories, and also a long novel of a thousand pages. I first wrote it fifteen years ago; then it was confiscated. I'd given it to someone to look after, and one day he said: "Sorry, the police came and took it away." So I rewrote it from memory. When State Security arrested me in 1974 they took the new version, along with all the unpublished manuscripts I had hidden at home. But that time I had taken precautions by photocopying some passages and stowing them somewhere safe. In jail I tried to reconstruct it all in my mind, but when I came out, I was too desperate to feel like reworking it. It was in New York that I resurrected it for the third time. From the day I reached the United States I couldn't get it out of my mind, as if it had to be finished before I could start to exist again.

—What is the theme?

ARENAS: A man and a woman sitting by the sea and thinking about what has happened to them since the revolution of 1959. My novel is called *Once More the Sea*, and tells the secret history of the Cuban people, the people who swarm behind the official phoney history, with its military processions and mass meetings, and also the back-scratchers.

—Who are you referring to?

ARENAS: I'm referring to all those people who make their little trip to Cuba, sing their song of praise, then fly away. They're happy just to parrot what the officials tell them, without even opening their eyes. It's always the same old story, like André Gide's visit to Moscow. Still, we console ourselves with the thought that the same people will probably come back and be disenchanted in a few years' time.

—But in the light of what you're saying, how do you explain Castro managing to remain so popular with all the radicals in the Third World?

ARENAS: It's precisely because Castro's press never allows the Cuban people to speak, the ones in the concentration camps, or the ones in old Havana, who are just as destitute as they were under Batista.

—All the same, Castroism has had some influential supporters—take Alejo Carpentier, for instance.

ARENAS: What does that prove? I like Alejo Carpentier's books a lot, and he was kind enough to admire *Hallucinations*, and even to stand up for it. But he was a sort of official writer who came to Havana as a tourist. He lived in France, not Cuba. So. . . .

WHAT ARE you living on now?

ARENAS: I am professor of Cuban literature at the International University of Florida. And I try to keep on writing.

—Is it easier in New York than in Cuba?

ARENAS: In Cuba the writer is liable to suffer hardship and oppression. Here you have to be on your guard against the excesses of liberty. It is not so

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easy to resist that, especially when you arrive, as I did, with a culture gap of several centuries. But I have the impression that suddenly there is a lot to say, and I can say it without having State Security breathing down my neck. I'm starting from scratch, in fact. The French Revolution has that story of the Abbé who was asked what he had done during the Terror, and his answer was: "*J'ai survécu.*" That's what I've done, "survived", and so have ten million other Cubans. But today, after all these years, I feel I am finally starting to live. Sometimes it's a mixed feeling. Do you know that I'm taking a risk right now?

—*What do you mean?*

ARENAS: Castroism doesn't like its opponents to talk freely, you know. Even in New York. . . .

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Anwar Sadat, the slain Egyptian President, was interviewed in Cairo by Volkhard Windfuhr, a correspondent of *Der Spiegel*. The conversation lasted four hours, and was conducted in Arabic; it took place in Sadat's villa on the left bank of the Nile on Thursday, 1 October. President Sadat was assassinated on Tuesday, 6 October 1981.

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EAST & WEST

Report on Poland

Solidarity's Tug-of-War

By Maxine Pollack, Janusz Bugajski

ON OCTOBER 18th, the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers Party rid itself of Stanislaw Kania and his ineffectual "moderation." The installation of the Warsaw Pact Commander, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, as Communist Party chief was coupled with a resolution calling for an immediate crackdown on the independent trade union, Solidarity. Its right to strike was to be suspended, its agreements with the government were to be renegotiated, its limited access to the media was to be cut back even further. Jaruzelski, a Soviet-trained military man, was already Poland's Prime Minister and Defence Minister when he became First Secretary; the unprecedented concentration of power in his hands came as a response to the unprecedented level of tension within the Polish Communist Party, and between State authorities and the self-governing Solidarity movement.

The abrupt change of leadership signalled a conservative attempt to define the Party's "leading role" in promoting socialist "renewal", a principle conspicuously though ambiguously affirmed in the Gdansk Agreement of August 1980 which had legalised Solidarity. To the Communist hardliners, now in the ascendant, "renewal" signified above all the eventual recovery of Party strength. The replacement of Kania by a tougher negotiator was, by this logic, a step in the right direction; but the retaking of ground ceded by Kania to the union remained the prime objective. Hardline reaction in the upper echelons of the Party, given timely impetus by Moscow, gathered momentum and reasserted itself with new animus.

From September 1980, when Stanislaw Kania left his post as security chief to succeed Edward Gierek as Party leader, the energies of high-ranking *apparatchiks* were diverted toward fighting a war on two fronts: not only against the would-be reformers outside the Party, but also (and more urgently) against the revisionists within. It was the Extraordinary Ninth Party Congress in July which marked a fateful shift in emphasis, polarising rearguard opposition to the Party's soft-touch leader, and not merely to the rebellious demands of grassroots Party members. Even the larger task of containing Solidarity's activism was temporarily given second priority while hardliners moved to reimpose order from the top.

ALTHOUGH AT THE TIME it was heralded by Western analysts as a legitimising triumph for Communist "liberalism", the Party congress filled key posts with die-hard conservatives, while effectively defusing rank-and-file pressure for "horizontal communication" and "real democracy." The executive, elected by local delegates through unprecedented direct and secret ballots, assumed power on promises of radical internal reforms which were never kept. On paper, the subsequent changes in the Party apparatus looked impressive, but in practice they hardly made the leadership accountable to the grassroots. Important policy initiatives continued to originate exclusively from above; directives travelled vertically down a well-worn path of no resistance.

STANISLAW KANIA'S short-lived and ultimately short-sighted triumph lay in managing to retain sufficient credibility in the eyes of a discontented rank-and-file to be re-elected as First Secretary in July. A number of more orthodox Communists lost their seats in the reshuffle, and many were replaced by callow youths. None the less, many of the members of the new Central Committee, who had kept a studiously low profile at the congress, re-emerged as new style hardliners, antipathetic above all to Solidarity and deeply resentful of those Party moderates who adopted conciliatory postures toward it. Although roughly one-third of the Polish Communist Party had joined the union, only 40 of the Central Committee's 200 members belonged to Solidarity—and 12 of them later renounced their union membership, at the same Central Committee meeting which ousted Kania as Party leader. (The October 18th resolution which launched a crackdown on Solidarity also demanded that "all Party members belonging to Solidarity ... define their political position clearly.") The new Politburo of 15 members featured Soviet-backed dogmatists like Stefan Olszowski and Albin Siwak, who stood

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ready in the wings for a later leadership bid, should opportunity arise if and when the tide of liberalising reform had turned.

Turn it did, at least temporarily—but one must take account of the external forces which helped to determine the outcome—and the legacy—of the Extraordinary Ninth Party Congress. In the turbulent months preceding it, the Soviet Union had exerted heavy pressure on the Party leadership to get tough—or get out. Representatives of many rank-and-file Communists were pushing ahead with demands for democratising changes in the structure and statutes of the Party. They had been organising their campaign across the country—outside the official network of Party communications and control—ever since the workers' revolt of September 1980 which brought Polish industry to a virtual standstill and faced the discredited Party leadership under Gierek with a crisis of will. By April 1981, when the "horizontal" movement reached a crescendo at Torun, divisions within the Party seemed to be not merely an embarrassment, but a danger to authoritarian rule. The Kremlin clearly perceived that the fundamental Marxist-Leninist principle of "democratic centralism" was in jeopardy, and with it the cohesion of the entire Soviet bloc. In April, "routine" Warsaw Pact manoeuvres on Poland's borders were ostentatiously commenced.

Kania repeatedly ignored the exhortations from dogmatic comrades at home and in Moscow to nip the rapid growth of revisionism in the bud. His audacious preference was to quell grassroots unrest by modest conciliation—and, superficially, it worked. But in solving one problem he aggravated another, and this was to be his undoing. His failure to appease the hardliners at the top, particularly in dealings with the free trade union, finally spurred them into action. Shortly before the Congress convened, editorials openly critical of Kania's overly tolerant leadership began to appear regularly in *Pravda*, and stern-faced Soviet advisors paid a series of fraternal visits to Warsaw. But the grimmest card played by Moscow was the warning letter which arrived just five weeks before the Congress; it contained a veiled threat of direct intervention which inevitably recalled the somewhat similar letter that had been sent to the Czechoslovak leader Alexander Dubcek in the summer of 1968.

MOSCOW'S ACTIVITY was not only a means of intimidating the moderates into toeing the Soviet line. It was also a vital signal to the disgruntled rear-guard of orthodoxy in the Polish Communist Party, encouraging them to intensify their opposition and prepare to take charge once again. Emboldened by full Soviet approval, the hardliners became more visible and vociferous in denouncing the moderate "accommodators" who pandered to "heretics" and outright "anti-socialists." The official press, supervised by Kania's rival, the "flexible" die-hard Olszowski, disseminated scathing views of Party revisionists, implicitly demanding another leader who would deal with them aggressively. A direct challenge to Kania ultimately came from the inveterate hardliner Tadeusz Grabski, at an emergency meeting of the Central Committee called in the wake of the Soviet letter, but the ensuing vote of confidence endorsed Kania as First Secretary and reaffirmed his more moderate stance, indicating to die-hard conservatives that a seizure of power was not immediately possible. Grabski paid for his indiscretion by losing his Politburo seat in the broad-based Congress elections which followed. More prudent politicians—like Olszowski, who declined to run for Party chief in July—managed to secure their mandates and keep their options open.

AFTER THE PARTY CONGRESS, which stifled rebellion in the lower ranks, the hardliners revived their resistance to Solidarity's initiatives, largely unimpeded by the beleaguered moderates. The full scope of this campaign was first suggested by a document which Solidarity had managed to publish and distribute widely in June. Compiled from written and oral directives transmitted by the Central Committee to government ministries from December 1980 onwards, the document exposed neatly coordinated policies intended to sabotage and discredit the free trade union, and also increase social tension to breaking point. Highest on the list of hardline priorities were economic offensives designed to "tire out the nation" as a means to the end. Functionaries in the Ministry of the Interior had been instructed to "create operational difficulties in the distribution of produce and goods." Slander of the union in the official media (a catalyst for the Polish printers' strike in August) was authorised by a command to "spread the news that Solidarity is to blame for the shortages and the queues."

For months Solidarity representatives had presented State authorities with citizens' reports of food wastage, and factory workers and warehouse men had castigated the retention or outright spoilage of desperately needed manufactured goods. Early in August 1981, in response to public outcry and the demands of the unions, the Vice-Premier, Mieczyslaw Rakowski (who was in charge of government-union negotiations), agreed that Solidarity could be empowered under existing legislation to investigate the allegations of supply mismanagement. The next day talks came to an abrupt and stormy end, and the enterprise was temporarily abandoned. The Solidarity press spokesman, then J. Onyszkiewicz, responded

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angrily to "false information" in official statements which blamed the union for the fiasco and accused it of deliberate provocation. Lech Walesa issued his own statement in Solidarity's national weekly: "We are not seeking a confrontation with the authorities. We want a dialogue and negotiations. But . . . the dialogue must be genuine."

Nearly two months before the August breakdown in the government-union talks, Solidarity's exposé revealed pertinent directives from the Central Committee to the Ministry of Work, Wages, & Welfare. Government officials had been instructed to "employ delaying tactics" where negotiations with Solidarity representatives were unavoidable. Official media coverage was to "emphasise that obstacles towards the realisation of an understanding are the result of the negative attitudes of Solidarity"—although government spokesmen were of necessity reminded that they must "formally accept the existence of Solidarity." Discussions in good faith were explicitly precluded. This holding pattern has essentially remained, with few and limited deviations, indicating that a sizeable contingent in the upper echelons of the Party has never fundamentally accepted the validity or legality of the Gdansk accord.

More evidence of official strategies intended to thwart the union was provided by Solidarity in abundant detail—authorisations of judicial abuses, criminal police activity, techniques for disrupting and infiltrating normal union operations, and various other kinds of provocations. On each score there had been mass demonstrations of protest in recent months. Last summer, in hunger strikes and marches in Warsaw, Poles demanded the release of political prisoners and called for an end to the trial (and the retrial) of so-called "subversives." In Bydgoszcz and Lublin, entire police squadrons issued formal statements protesting against unlawful commands and the dismissal of hundreds of officers for trade-union activities without right of appeal. Throughout the country, the people have condemned false charges and arbitrary arrests and violent assaults on Solidarity members, forcible confiscation of union printing materials, and the disruption of union elections. Allegations of official collusion in these crimes have not been proven—because local authorities refuse to investigate them.

THE STILL RAGING CONTROVERSY which aroused the fiercest reaction within the Party has centred on the issue of workers' self-management. Long before the term made headlines in the Western press, the Central Committee launched a major "counter-offensive" against Solidarity's economic reform initiatives. The union's proposed programme for Poland's economic recovery (presented at its National Congress in September) sought hire-and-fire rights for labour over management, supervision of industrial enterprises by freely-elected workers' councils, and a major role for Solidarity in national economic policy-making. Such reforms would have radically decentralised Poland's hopelessly inefficient Planning appartus and severely undercut the Government's ability to direct industry according to disastrous Politburo priorities.

Since the Party's powers of initiative and control would have been affected, from top to bottom, these proposals for authentic workers' self-management united Communist hardliners and moderates in strong orthodox opposition. Even Rakowski, a Central Committee member with a relatively moderate record, drew the line here, warning Solidarity in September that "*blood will flow*" if the union did not water down its demands. Direct confrontation was narrowly averted later that month, just before the second session of the National Congress: union and government representatives reached a tentative compromise, highly unpopular with constituents on both sides. The government's conservative-minded "Economic Stabilisation & Reform Bill", due to take effect in 1982, was amended to give the government the right to appoint managers only in "major" enterprises, with limited rights of veto for the union. Cases of dispute were to go to an as yet non-existent board of independent arbitrators.

SOLIDARITY'S NATIONAL CONGRESS, which took place within two months of the Party Congress, vividly exposed the substantial conflict of interests between the State and Polish society. Unlike the Party Congress in July, which checked the reformist aspirations of the rank-and-file, the National Congress saw an upsurge of grassroots radicalism. This was duly noted by Communist hardliners—and precipitated an official reaction of unprecedented fury. A document (issued by the Central Committee's Social-Industrial Department in June, analysing draft statutes on workers' self-management to be presented by the union at the National Congress) launched a "politico-organisational and programme-agitational counter-offensive" to Solidarity's economic initiatives. These were deemed "aggressively anti-socialist", "illegal and socially harmful", and a "threat to the political and constitutional foundations of the Polish People's Republic." Such allegations of intended subversion, circulated secretly during the summer to all local Party branches, have since been made publicly—not only by confirmed hardliners, but also by previously prominent moderates. Frequently their wording has almost exactly matched the official warnings issued to rebellious Polish workers in 1956 and in 1970, shortly before they were gunned down in the streets. Ominous too were

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the renewed promises of "fraternal aid" from the Soviet Union.

But the official response to Solidarity's demands for sweeping economic reforms and to soaring popular discontent has not been confined to rhetorical attack or even to covert manoeuvres. At a time of dire austerity—the worst in Poland since the War—the country's security budget has been increased and the period of military conscription has been extended by two months. In late September the security forces were alerted to stand ready for a national state of emergency. Armed troops began patrolling streets and markets in selected towns. Harassment of Solidarity members engaged in legal activities escalated precipitously in October and provoked spontaneous mass demonstrations, notably in Wroclaw and Katowice, where angry crowds manifested their contempt for the local authorities. Party hardliners, seeking to shore up their ever-weakening régime, proffered nothing more—or less—than a show of force as a solution to Poland's chronic socio-economic crisis. "Law and order", the official slogan of the day, began to sound like a battle cry.

THE THREAT of the imposition of martial law failed to stop the Solidarity leaders organising a one-hour nationwide strike in late October. Seen by Polish authorities as an act of defiance, it nevertheless came as a necessary response to swelling pressure from an increasingly restive populace. Two-thirds of Poland's 49 regions were already gripped by industrial stoppages, and many of these had been called for unilaterally, without clearance from the Solidarity coordinators. More than ever determined to throttle the independent trade union, the Party hardliners continued to attack the symptoms rather than the causes of the widespread unrest, and sent thousands of troops to "assist" in the distribution of essential supplies.

As labour unrest mounted under the burden of steep price increases, inadequate meat rationing, and lengthening queues, the government consented to reopen emergency talks on economic programmes of action. The hardline backlash to this development was immediate and intense. At the party's all-important Warsaw branch, Olszowski inveighed against the Party leadership and declared in a published polemic that the union was being allowed to get away with too much. In line with a statement that had appeared in *Pravda* two days earlier, Olszowski called for a thorough purge of any Party members who were too squeamish to take on Solidarity's "counter-revolutionaries." Nevertheless, despite the rear guard's sabre-rattling, an historic meeting was called on 4 November between the leaders of the Polish government, the Church, and the free trade union.

There was symbolic if not substantive promise in that concerted effort: soon afterwards, the government proposed a "Front of National Accord", allegedly for future three-way cooperation; and high-level talks between government and union were reopened after a long lapse. But there was still an abyss between the spokesmen on each side of the bargaining table: inevitably, the issue of power-sharing proved a stumbling block in the negotiations. More than ever, Solidarity wanted an institutionalised role in national policy-making—yet official resistance to that demand was as strong as ever.

A wide range of reforms hung in the balance at the November talks: the reordering of the economy, easy access to the media, free local and regional elections. Union members were far from unanimous in supporting the idea of yet another "national front", which—without concrete concessions from the authorities—could be used to undermine the bargaining position of Solidarity. Of supreme importance to the union was acceptance of its comprehensive economic programme of action. The groundwork of that programme was set out in a document published in mid-November by "Network", a union advisory council which had organised "self-managing workers' committees" in leading industrial enterprises across the country.

Network's scheme prescribed radical surgery on Poland's ailing economy. It proposed that central control over planning, pricing and investment should be removed from the "bureaucratic machine", and outlined a legal framework for "social enterprises" which were "independent, self-managing, and self-financing." All of the economic organs of State would be made directly accountable to Parliament, which was to ensure that planning and performance reflected the "authentic influence of society." The government's future role in steering the national economy would be confined to delineating "strategic aims."

NEGOTIATIONS on these and other points must be seen in the context of a strenuous tug-of-war between Polish society and the Communist Party. After years of pulling, the fraying rope held taut between them could snap; pressure from outside the arena or provocation from inside could throw the contestants hopelessly off balance. This can perhaps be avoided if General Jaruzelski realises that ultimately a genuine compromise with Solidarity may be less dangerous to the survival of the present Party leadership than continuation of the conflict *à l'outrance*.

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Adventure Playgrounds

On Spaghetti Westerns—By RICHARD MAYNE

THE HEADMASTER of my prep school used to argue that politicians, not soldiers, should fight wars. Let them strip off and box or wrestle each other: it would save lives, money, time, and suffering. It would also be richly comic. Instead of a nuclear arms race, there would have to be political fitness drives to eliminate flab. Would the Whips' Office take on new meaning? How about jogging on Constitution Hill? Roll up to the United Nations All-in Wrestling Ring to see Mr Arafat in shorts and singlet trying to get Mr Begin in a Boston Crab. Book now for the over-seventies bout between the White House and the Kremlin. Place your bets on Big Daddy or Giant Haystacks for presidency of the world.

A variant on this fantasy is the Global Adventure Playground. Imagine a few hundred square miles of remote territory, perhaps an island, impregnably surrounded by laser beams or lethal electric fencing, and equipped by parachute with food, clothing, rudimentary shelter, and fairly primitive weaponry. There, instead of filling the prisons, civilised countries would maroon their violent law-breakers: terrorists, professional hit men, persistent rioters, intractable football hooligans, motor-cycle tearaways, rent-a-thug agitators, and other political or non-political specialists in grievous bodily harm. There, confined in an ill-nature reserve or on Desert Island Disgusting, the undesirables could air their grievances, live out their fantasies, kill off their enemies, and enjoy the excitement and viciousness they evidently need. Some potential mercenaries, pariah dogs of war, might volunteer to join them. Enterprising TV companies might tape some thrilling footage for sedentary voyeurs. Adventurers of both sexes might fancy Danger Holidays, ending (with luck) in a helicopter rescue. And the rest of us would be spared having to share society with the tiresome minority who don't like peace.

PERHAPS THE NOTION is less fanciful than it seems. John Buchan's heroes and their real-life counterparts pursued "the great game" in distant trouble-spots, and made no pretence of not enjoying it. The super powers today wage many of their wars by proxy, on the fringes of their "spheres of influence." "Wars of liberation" are exalting and exhilarating as well as squalid and brutal. And even within the United Kingdom there are "no-go" areas—in Ulster already, perhaps potentially in Britain itself.

But the biggest adventure playground is a "no-go" area in every sense. No one at all can go there, because it doesn't exist. Some aspects of it never did. And yet it seems real to millions, as vivid and familiar as their own home towns. They know its lore, its décor, its heroes and villains, much of its geography and history. They even play its chicken-pluckin' music. Yes, you've guessed right: it's the world of Wild West films.

A FEW YEARS AGO, Michael Crichton made a movie, *Westworld*, which capitalised on the Wild West as an adventure playground. The plot was roughly that of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. Wealthy holiday-makers were invited to "Westworld" (and to two other movie-based dreamlands, Arthurian and Ancient Roman), where all the inhabitants are life-like robots—the bartender, the baddie, the saloon women—electronically controlled by technicians below ground. The visitors can have brawls, gunfights, orgies, and emerge unscathed . . . until something goes wrong. Then the invincible robot gunslinger, played by Yul Brynner, begins to stalk his human prey. It was Disneyland turned nightmare: a shrewd comment on the hackneyed imaginary worlds we carry around between our ears.

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Why are Westerns so compelling? As Christopher Frayling reminds us in his study of their Italian incarnation,[1] "spaghetti Westerns" are not the only foreign variant. The nickname may suggest some Woody Allen parody, with lariats made of *fettuccine* and six-guns spitting *tortellini*; but by culinary analogy there are also "paella Westerns", "Sauerkraut Westerns", and "bouillabaisse Westerns." Once, I firmly believe, I saw part of a *British* (or fish-and-chips) Western, apparently made on Epsom Downs, with prop men rather jerkily carrying the identical cactus plant and piece of thorn bush past a railroad carriage window time after time to give the illusion of movement. In Germany, the 19th-century mythomaniac (and ex-convict) Karl May wrote some 35 immensely successful "Western" stories about "Old Shatterhand" and "Winnetou the Warrior", in which frontiersmen exclaimed—in English—"*zounds*", "*lackaday*", and "*pshaw*", while Apache warriors said things like "*Howgh, ich habe gesprochen*", followed by an assenting chorus of "*Uff, Uff!*" Bizarre as Karl May's stories may appear, they have so far sold more than 26 million copies in 16 languages. It was after *Winnetou* had been successfully televised in Germany that Italian producers began to take interest in Westerns: so Karl May was one of the forbears of the cult.

Another, as Dr Frayling points out, was Blaise Cendrars, whose *L'Or* dramatised the story of Johann August Suter or Sutter, a true rags-to-riches-to-rags tale of the Gold Rush. Sergei Eisenstein wrote a screenplay on the subject; Luis Trenker filmed another under the title *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien*; James Cruze made the best-known version, *Sutter's Gold*—which later became the name of a rose. And, of course, there was the original horse opera, Puccini's *La Fanciulla del West*. Long before Sergio Leone made a star of Clint Eastwood, the spaghetti, paella, sauerkraut, bouillabaisse and, yes, borsch were on the hob.

MANY WHITE AMERICANS, it's true, came from Europe; but that alone hardly explains the fascination of the Old West. Myself, I suspect that the clichés are part of the answer: modern urban nostalgia for the wide open spaces where men are men—i.e. physically active, and on horseback. The horses are important: there's surely far less glamour about a cowherd on foot. No less essential is the landscape. It may conceal dangers—angry expropriated redskins, rockfalls, vicious reptiles. It may offer the promise of gold. But, essentially, its vistas beckon with all the ache and longing of a Claude Lorrain painting, an infinite golden distance of hazy possibility before the planet was mapped out and we buckled down to our limitations.

Within that landscape, before "the End of the Frontier", the pioneers were still staking out a new world, forming their social contract, building society and politics from scratch. Of course, much of their land was stolen from the Indians; of course, they brought with them memories and traditions. The *tabula rasa* was never complete. And the pioneering period was brief. As in India, Africa, Israel, and other areas of white settlement, huge complications followed. But the pristine moment has never lost its appeal.

This, to me, is the heart of the matter. The Wild West is like Toytown—a schematic *polis*. For the Mayor, the Judge; for Ernest the Policeman, the Sheriff; for Mr Growser, the baddie. Could Larry the Lamb and Dennis the Dachshund be Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid? Captain 'Iggins probably keeps the Saloon. The Magician and the Inventor both have their places in the John Ford stock company; and beyond the hills, in the badlands, is the rival community of Arkville. It's all very primitive, a child's box of political building-bricks: but, by simplifying, it dramatises some of the essentials in any society, however complex or vast. No wonder that Western films, like *High Noon* or *Friendly Persuasion*, have often enshrined contemporary political creeds.

DENIS DE ROUGEMONT once remarked that the secret of Europe's vitality could be seen in the main square, flanked by the church, the market, and the town hall—faith, commerce, and civic rule. The typical Western movie lot is equally symbolic: it adds, with the saloon, the element of high jinks ignored by Professor de Rougemont. But in American Westerns I used to feel that there was something lacking. Often, the place seemed as temporary, as factitious, as barren as a trailer park. Perhaps some real Western communities actually were. But then came the "spaghetti Westerns"—and suddenly there was a change. It was not (*pace M*'s "Column" in the September ENCOUNTER) that Italian directors' approach was "deep, warm, human, lovable"; in reality, the films were often melodramatic, cynical, and cold. But, as Christopher Frayling now amply proves, the new elements included an unaccustomed emphasis on two very Latin features: the Church and the Clan.

Dr Frayling goes out of his way to discredit what he calls "the 'Cultural Roots' Controversy"—a rather pointless argument about whether Italians had the "ingrained tradition" to make good Western films. Here as elsewhere he seems to be trying to shake off a snarling pack of film theorists, to whom he continually throws academic bones.

[1] *Spaghetti Westerns: Cowboys and Europeans from Karl May to Sergio Leone.* By CHRISTOPHER FRAYLING. Routledge, £15.95, £8.95.

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"I firmly believe that the only film criticism that is worthwhile is located within a coherent framework of theory."

"Only if this assumption is accepted can the stories be expected to mediate, or 'resolve', social contradictions specific to America."

In one involved passage, too long to quote, he chunters on about "Vladimir Propp's method", "Cawelti's analysis", and "Frederic Jameson's words." He invokes "Fanonism", Brecht, "an unending struggle in capitalism between victims and predators" (as if Communism didn't have them too), and "the bourgeois concept of representation"—a phrase he quotes (amid other garbage) from the vapourings of Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Jean-Luc Godard. If all this is necessary to fight off flak from students at the Royal College of Art, so be it: Dr Frayling is Professor of General Studies there. But from behind the camouflage, a much more genial character peeps out. After a canny Preface, Dr Frayling suddenly says: "End of song, beginning of story. . . ."

And he has a lot to tell. Filmographics of spaghetti-Western directors; details of scenes and dialogue cut from distributed prints; structural analysis of Sergio Leone's major Westerns; interviews and anecdotes; a discussion of American Westerns influenced by "spaghettis"; and an incomparable collection of stills.

One of the stills he actually uses twice—in one place reversed to suit the layout. This is a fine shot of a brooding heavy, Lee Van Cleef, cocking a rifle and looking bleakly out through mean, narrowed eyes. Eyes like that look balefully out from almost every frame. It's a harsh place, Leone's West, and a bloody one: all the "spaghettis" are served with lashings of *sugo di pomodoro*, or in Jenni Calder's phrase about "Mexican" Westerns, chili con carnage. Are they harmless, comic-strip in-jokes at the expense of Hollywood conventions? Are they in some cases valid political comments, showing that murder is no fun? Their iconography, with startling close-ups and deep-focus backgrounds, certainly owes something to comic-strip conventions; their politics, even in Leone's case, certainly reflect Left-of-centre assumptions. But for all Dr Frayling's pains in teasing out the plots and implications of these movies, the final impression that I get from them is simple and sad. Their real "message" seems to me an advertisement for violence. The ineffable Godard, quoted here, even made it explicit.

"It is necessary to stop making movies on politics, to stop making political movies, and to begin making political movies *politically*. It means maybe taking a gun one day, and the next day going back to a pen or the camera."

How depressing it is when people mistake an adventure playground for the real world.

Languages

At first they just had English.
Then he learned her Russian
and she his German
in the hope of understanding.

German became the argument
their children mustn't know,
a Grimm's tale of ghastliness
muttered behind closed doors.

Russian rose to emotion
the welcoming of friends,
laughter, enormous promises,
inexhaustible tears.

English was kept for politeness,
for the strangers they lived among,
tentative and considerate,
as when they'd used it the day they met.

Will Vaughan

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DOCUMENT

Sadat's Last Interview

Egypt on the Eve of the Assassination

MR PRESIDENT, *violent clashes between Moslems and Christians . . . more than 1,500 members of the opposition arrested by the security forces . . . newspapers shut down. . . . What is happening in Egypt?*

SADAT: The question is a justified one. I had promised the people to explain what was going on after the recent days of death and destruction in Cairo. And after my return from the USA I had to take drastic steps since the situation had become dangerously critical. Not that the unity of the nation was in danger: it wasn't as bad as all that. Neither the security of the state nor the régime were by any means endangered. Never. It wasn't a matter of acute danger. It was rather a case of general laxity in obeying the law, and that can cause all kinds of problems, especially in view of the activities of Islamic groups and also the Copts. It may be, as you say, that our action came too late to save the lives of the fourteen Egyptian victims. But perhaps it will prove enough to protect future generations from much worse. I was thinking of the future, and of the man who one day will be taking my place.

—Are you, then, already thinking of your successor? You once said in a previous interview a year ago that you had no intention of extending your present term of office beyond October 1982.

A FEW DAYS *before he was shot in Cairo at a military parade (6 October), Anwar Sadat gave a long interview to a characteristically insistent "Spiegel" correspondent. We publish the conversation in full as Sadat's last political message, in a way the "last will and testament" of this extraordinary man who came out of Nasser's shadow to overshadow all contemporary statesmen in the strife-torn Middle East.*

SADAT: I'm longing for that time. But for the time being I have to deal with my people, and straighten out things with my sons. You know, occasionally I have dreamed of doing what Willy Brandt has done and just dedicate myself to the large affairs of the Party. But I don't know yet how my people would take that. I have been preparing a book on the twelve years of my office, which will soon be over. I think I will have to make the final decision when the time has come.

—But you didn't take that much time for reflection when you decided to strike at your opponents on the Left and the Right.

SADAT: If we had not acted now, Egypt would have been caught up in a religious conflict the likes of which we have never experienced in our long history.

—Then Egypt was indeed threatened?

SADAT: If I give you now the numbers of those who have been arrested, you will see that the stability of the régime was not involved. Of the 1,536 now in prison, 467 are members of the Islamic extremist organisation, "Takfir wel-Higra", the killers of Sheikh El-Sahibi [the former Egyptian Minister and proponent of a modern Islam was murdered in 1977]. Some 235 are members of other extremist Moslem groups. Then there is another group of 100 Islamic extremists. Islamic and Christian fanatics add 259 persons to the list. Then there are a further 107 Christian fanatics, including priests and laymen. And then 26 party politicians who fan the flames of religious fanaticism: 16 from the mixed circle of Communists, 7 from the Socialist Workers party, and three reactionaries from the Wafd party, old and new.

—But the figures don't quite seem to add up.

SADAT: I haven't actually gone through the whole list. But from these figures you can see that I didn't want to take care of the whole opposition. The

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chairmen of the two Leftist parties are still at liberty, hold press conferences, and distribute their literature. If I had wanted to I could have had them picked up too—and there were grounds enough, for they have been taking part in the campaign to work up the religious elements.

—You wanted to go through the rest of the list of the arrested. . . .

SADAT: Aha, here we have 31 journalists, lawyers and others who have been fishing in muddy waters and in irresponsible ways putting the nation's unity at risk. Twelve others became security risks through their contacts with the Soviet Union. When we add 240 thieves and criminals and some 59 who were involved in the incidents of El-Sauja el-Hamra, we come to the total of 1,536.

—Wouldn't it have been sufficient to arrest just those who were directly involved in the religious riots?

SADAT: All those who have been imprisoned were, directly or indirectly, involved in the inflammatory religious agitations or tried to use the disquiet for their own political purposes. However, in all of this we should not overlook the fact that Moslems and Christians have always lived in peace in Egypt. The Koran enjoins us to believe in Moses and Jesus, that is, in the Torah of the Jews and the Bible of the Christians.

—Why don't the Moslem Brothers hold to this?

SADAT: In periods of decline, you see, there is always an emergence of religious enthusiasm in Islam. Here in Egypt I have to deal with a variation of the rebellious American and European hippy movement, that is to say, with young people who are in revolt against the prevailing values. This total rejection in the West may take the form of going barefoot or running around naked. Amongst us, the young rebels would be tempted to take an overdose of religion.

—If this is typical for the period of decline, then Egypt must be going downhill. . . ?

SADAT: No, the radical rejectionism of the Euro-American youth first emerged with us in the defeatist days after the Israeli Six Day War in 1967. Even before that our youth was subjected to unsettling Marxist influences, ideas which opposed our deeply-rooted religious feelings as well as traditional moral values, opposed the very spirit of Egypt. And I mean by that above all the family as well as religion, both of which are rejected by Marxism.

—But the Moslem Brotherhood can hardly be said to be drinking at the sources of Marxism.

SADAT: In order to understand the phenomenon of religious fanaticism, you must remember that until the '67 War a part of our youth was under Marxist influence. The terrible defeat in those six days had the result that our youth began to question everything, but everything. They discovered that we had been instilling in them illusions which had nothing to do with the depressing realities. This was the period in which many young people took flight into religion, a dangerous phase of the rejection of present-day values. The state-controlled media were at that time controlled by Marxists who were at war with all religious trends, and consequently the nihilism of the disappointed and humiliated youth took the shape of religious fanaticism.

MR PRESIDENT, *didn't you contribute to this development when you released the members of the Moslem Brotherhood who had been imprisoned by your predecessor, Gamal Abd el-Nasser?*

SADAT: In the framework of the Revolution of 15 May 1971 I released all the inmates of the concentration camps, which I therewith closed forever. Yes, I restored the Moslem Brothers to their various posts, and even paid them the salaries that were owing. I wanted to compensate for injustice done.

—But the released religious fanatics took this all to be an encouragement. . . .

SADAT: If I knew then what I know now, I would have left them in the camps. They did indeed use the liberalisation which followed the successful October War of 1973 for their own purposes, taking advantage of the unusual democratic freedoms. They felt secure. But the new liberty was misused. The old Moslem Brotherhood's leaders wanted to take revenge on the Revolution of 1952. There were also the political opportunists who abuse religious feelings for their political goals. They want to realise personal ambitions, and take up the struggle against governmental authority, and the state leaders.

—They were also anti-American.

SADAT: Correct. They claimed that the West, above all America, was an enemy of Islam. In their journal *El-Dawa*, the Moslem Brotherhood wrote that the Egyptian Revolution of 1952 was an American-inspired military *putsch*. I'll have them pay dearly for this defamation of our national struggle.

—Shouldn't you have struck earlier if you wanted to put the Islamic terroristic groupings out of business without much ado?

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SADAT: You are right, because they were involved in Khomeini-like terrorism. As long as I am still here, they cannot do anything. But once I am gone, they might well achieve something. In today's Egypt there can be no place for such people.

—Yet one finds them everywhere.

SADAT: In the last referendum some eleven million Egyptians voted against them, and they themselves only polled 60,000 votes. If any of them should get active today it would be the public, not the police, which would take care of them. It could be that here-or-there the members of the extreme Moslem groups will show themselves. But they are on the run, and we are going to put them out of business.

—Prominent in the list of your detainees is a Christian, the Coptic Patriarch Shenouda III. How did he incur your anger?

SADAT: Anba Shenouda is a fanatic. My difficulties began with the day of his appointment, for like the princes of the Church in the European Middle Ages he wants to exercise temporal as well as spiritual power. He arranged for himself a comfortable electoral majority of yea-sayers in the Holy Synod of the Coptic Church and declared himself to be "the spokesman of the Copts." This amounted to a first step into politics; and this was not legitimate, for our Copts are represented through their Parliamentary delegates and through the *Maglis Milla*, the church council. But in Alexandria the Patriarch fomented trouble, and abroad he broadcast the charge that the Copts were being oppressed. His horror stories circulated in Canada and the USA, in Europe and Australia, and at the World Church Council in Geneva, all to the effect that the Christian minority was being persecuted in Egypt. And yet—when he asked me for permission to build 35 churches, I said to him: "Build 50 churches!" In the newly founded "City of the Tenth Ramadan" the Egyptian state for the first time in history financed the construction of a Christian church. In 1980 the Coptic Pope forbade Egyptian TV to broadcast the Easter services.

—But this was out of protest about the Moslem Brotherhood.

SADAT: When it came to the explosion of El-Sauja el-Hamra it must have been clear to him that Coptic fanaticism would only provoke an even stronger Islamic fanaticism. I must think of the generations to come. Consequently I must face a reckoning with anyone who preaches religious intolerance. If the Islam groupings are guilty of excesses, so is Shenouda, perhaps even more.

—To remove a Patriarch from his office, that hasn't happened in the whole 1,600-year history of the Coptic Church. . . .

SADAT: Well, what have I after all done with Shenouda? I haven't removed him, for that doesn't lie within my competence or power. I have only withdrawn the state's confirmation of his appointment, which doesn't touch his function as the chief of the Coptic Church.

—You have extended an invitation to Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of your journey to Jerusalem, to lay the foundation stone for a Holy Place of Moslems, Christians and Jews on Mount Sinai. Wouldn't this be an opportunity to reconcile oneself with the Coptic leader and to win back the sympathy of the millions of his faithful?

SADAT: That I cannot do. For me Shenouda doesn't exist any more.

—Critics are saying that the outbreak of the Moslem-Coptic rivalry was for President Sadat an opportunity to get rid of certain uncomfortable dissidents.

SADAT: Listen, Paragraph 74 of our Constitution gives me the right, when internal security is endangered, to take appropriate measures and then to put these to the test in a referendum. And that's what I have done. This clause, by the way, is what we have taken from de Gaulle's French constitution. Each of the prisoners will be brought before a judge, and the cases are already being prepared. It's all in the newspapers. The proceedings in court will be open. And the decisions will be taken according to prevailing Egyptian law, which is quite sufficient. I have no patience with show trials, special courts, and "kangaroo" proceedings. Nevertheless I regret that in the Revolution of 23 July 1952 we made a great mistake: we should have immediately cleared out all those people who want to take Egypt back into the pre-Revolutionary era, just as other revolutions do.

—Wouldn't that have damaged the prestige of the bloodless Egyptian revolution? Do you really regret that revolutionary mildness, you the hero of peace?

SADAT: If it were necessary I would call out again for the Revolution. Abd el-Nasser forbade the leader of the Wafd Party, Fuad Sarag el-Din, all political activity for ten years. I gave him back his money and his property. What, on the contrary, did Abraham Lincoln do at the end of the American Civil War? He allowed the confiscation of all the estates of all the Southern rebels and condemned two generations of fathers and sons to political isolation.

THE FORMER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF *of "Al-Ahram" and one-time confidant of Nasser, Hassanein Heikal, is neither for the Moslem Brotherhood nor for a return to*

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the era of pre-revolutionary corruption. Still you had him arrested.

SADAT: Heikal will have to answer much more serious charges. In his article he made a shameless attempt to raise a revolt. You journalists must know him well enough. If I were to say to him today that he could return to *Al-Ahram*, he would be prepared, just like that, to write anything and everything I tell him to. But I am not the kind of man who wants to have anything to do with his sort.

Of course there will continue to be an opposition in Egypt. You will be free to report what you please; we have no censorship, as in Israel. But if you were to write that the "hater" Heikal told you this or that, you don't thereby elevate him into the ranks of a serious oppositionist. Nor is it a serious opposition position when a party like the Socialist Workers praises the peace treaty with Israel and then changes its line and damns it utterly. That's childish. No, in Egypt there is no opposition that truly deserves the name.

—Can that opposition be so ignored?

SADAT: What are 60,000 against eleven million?

—How, then, do you define "Haters" as distinct from Oppositionists?

SADAT: Haters are those who put their own interests above the interests of their Egyptian homeland. Haters are absolute egoists who recognise nothing apart from themselves. Unfortunately the experiment in Egypt with an opposition has failed. But the attempt to try democracy was in fact successful, as the well-functioning National Democratic Party shows.

—That's the party of President Sadat. Is Egypt, then, moving in the direction of a one-party state?

SADAT: I base myself on a multi-party system. I have prohibited no party, nor will I do so. But I must see to it that the transition from a one-party state and from one-man rule goes painlessly forward, so that the people don't get lost in the experiment. Think of Portugal. After a dictatorship for 50 years the Portuguese demanded democratic ways and means overnight. And what happened? There was chaos in the land for two years, disorders bordering almost on civil war. That is the kind of thing I want to spare my beloved Egyptian people. The transition from an all-powerful régime to a multi-party state must take place step by step. Our recent difficulties have obvious causes. The pashas of the pre-revolutionary period still hold fast to their obsolete political conceptions. A man like Fuad Sarag el-Din gives the ideological impression of a Louis XVI who has survived the French Revolution. What we miss most is a feeling for political ethics. And we feel it to be unethical if someone attacks his Egyptian homeland when he is abroad.

—Is it, then, ethical to condemn dissidents to remain mute outside the frontiers?

SADAT: When the Arab graduates of American universities met together recently, they defended the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, although he had just had 22 of his political enemies executed. Yes, they even defended Assad of Syria although his tanks and troops are still attacking cities. They would say nothing against their Arab homelands. Only a handful of Egyptian students thought it appropriate to attack me and Egypt on the grounds that there was "no freedom and democracy." They thereafter returned to Egypt, where allegedly no freedom is, and were bothered by no one.

ONE MUST CONCEDE *that in comparison to other Arab states Egypt allows more personal freedom. Still, one has to ask about the future of an opposition on the Nile.*

SADAT: I am determined, despite the setbacks at present, to continue the Opposition Experiment, for we do not want under any circumstances to go backwards to a one-party state. On the Left there are the Socialist Workers Party and the National Progressive movement, neither of which I consider very important. But when I learned that the Soviet Ambassador had taken up contact with these parties, I declared him *persona non grata*, for he had violated our sovereignty. I did allow the Egyptian Communists to establish a Marxist party, and it was the best thing I could have done. It turned out that the Communists could not even win one single seat in Parliament. No, let the Communists have their party instead of going underground. They have lost all popular support; they represent nothing.

—If they are not so dangerous, then the state doesn't have to be seriously concerned with their Marxist ideas.

SADAT: Yes, but it has to be concerned with their proven collaboration with the Soviets who, by the way, also realise how weak their fellow-travellers in Egypt are. In the summer of 1980 we had to expel two Soviet "journalists." Their line was that Egypt was a hopeless case for Communism, but that the future belonged to the Islamic extremists. These "journalists" were recommending that the Moslem groups be supported; a conflict with the régime was encouraged; and along these lines the Communists might get a new chance. In 1981 the Soviets were responsible for the dissemination of anonymous

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pamphlets in which Christianity and Islam were both attacked and thus increased disorder in the community. We seized these pamphlets and thereafter expelled the Soviet Ambassador and seven or eight other members of the Embassy.

—One doesn't have to love Marxism in order to recognise that certain Marxian lines of thought might contribute to the solution of certain social and economic problems of the Third World.

SADAT: Egypt has had its own experiences with Marxism. I abandoned the experiment and instead turned to a liberal open-door policy.

—What, in your view, was so bad about the Marxist model?

SADAT: A better answer to that question would be supplied by the Poles or the Czechoslovakians. A part of the answer lies in the simple fact of Soviet imports of wheat from the Western world. No, Marxism doubles all social problems, for its motto is that "freedom of society" comes before freedom of the individual. Marxism crushes the individual. In the Soviet Union the citizen is simply sacrificed for the state; the single individual is without value.

—Economic difficulties are often the cause of political and religious fanaticism. . . .

SADAT: The great majority of Egyptians live better than they did in the past. To raise living standards Egypt subsidises the basic ingredients of the diet, and in order to make absolutely sure that the grants actually benefit the population we will be going over to the system of American "food stamps"; and this will raise the living standards of the lowest income groups.

MR PRESIDENT, *Egypt's major foreign-policy problem is the issue of Palestine, and the solution hasn't come any closer even though both the Americans and the Europeans have involved themselves in the "peace process." Couldn't the Soviet Union also play a role?*

SADAT: I could have wished that the Russians would agree to play a role, but unfortunately they won't; their single contribution is to put obstacles in the way of the peace process. Why should the making of peace between Egypt and Israel disturb the USSR? When we wanted to have a UN peace-keeping force stationed along the Egyptian-Israeli border, the Russians vetoed it. No, the Soviets are indulging in simple sabotage of peace in the Middle East. They know that America can play an important role because it can have an influence on the Israelis which they, the Russians, cannot.

—But the Syrians and the Palestinians, contrary to the Egyptians, sided with the USSR and not the USA.

SADAT: Yes, and with what results? The Russians are using the Syrians and the Palestinians only to make sure that all peace efforts fail. As a result we no longer ask for any kind of role, for it is clear that what they are really after is to get a solid foothold in the Middle East. In Syria, now they have to prop up Assad—he can't help them very much. The only country in which they once had a real base was Egypt—at least up to the time when I sent all of their 17,000 Russian experts home within a single week.

—Is peace in the Middle East possible without the Soviet Union?

SADAT: Without the Soviet Union, yes. Without America, no.

—Yet Syria, Libya and the PLO refuse to work at a peace initiative together with Egypt because of Egypt's friendship with the USA. . . .

SADAT: That's why they don't come up with any initiative at all; and also because Assad is fighting for his own survival and hasn't any energy left for anything else. The same goes for Gaddafi who travels around feverishly and just recently signed a tripartite pact with Ethiopia and South Yemen—they all want to save their own heads.

—Also among those who condemn your policies is the PLO leader Yassir Arafat and his Palestinian countrymen who are the ones who really count in the matter. . . .

SADAT: Let me tell you this—the PLO is not the sole or only representative of the Palestinian people. As for Yassir Arafat I am sorry to say that he is a man who breaks his word, saying one thing one day and revoking it the next. As far as I am concerned Arafat is not a man of leadership. In order to appease all the struggling factions he makes compromises and concessions on all sides. No, Yassir Arafat never has a position of his own and hardly ever takes a firm decision. For that reason we have nothing to do with him.

—But not only does Arafat's refusal hold up the Egypt-Israeli peace process, it also prevents the people in the occupied territories from working together with you. How are you ever going to overcome this obstacle?

SADAT: By tirelessly negotiating with the Israelis and the Americans.

—But the talks on Palestinian autonomy reached an impasse months ago.

SADAT: During Prime Minister Begin's recent visit

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in Alexandria, he and I decided that we were going to work for an overall settlement, so that our peace doesn't remain a "separate peace." Moreover, there is now a new approach: some weeks ago Israel and the PLO concluded a cease-fire in Southern Lebanon. This is an historic event, and we can build on it.

—Could that be the first step towards mutual recognition?

SADAT: An important step before that would be the proclamation of a Palestinian government-in-exile, and if the Palestinians would form a real government I would welcome it in Cairo. If it is only made up of Soviet agents, then they needn't bother to come. Early on, even before the October 1973 war, I proposed to Arafat and Abu Ijad that they come to Cairo and establish their headquarters here. We would have given them every support. . . . But they preferred to remain in Beirut, where exactly what I had warned them about came to pass: namely, that Al Fatah, although it amounts to 80% of the PLO, is checked by the remaining 20% plus Hafiz al-Assad.

SOME SEVEN MONTHS *from now, according to the Camp David agreement, Israel has to withdraw completely from Sinai. Are there any questions or doubts?*

SADAT: No, on 25 April Israel will return the rest of Sinai to Egypt. That's a settled affair. And after 25 April 1982, nothing will change in the Egyptian position. Egypt has an historic responsibility and will continue to stand up for the Palestinians. If Western Europe gets together politically, militarily, and economically with Israel and the United States, we shall indeed achieve an overall solution of the Middle East conflict. Politically, Europe could guarantee the borders of the Middle East countries. That would free Israel from the fear that a Palestinian state would turn against her or become a bridgehead of the Soviet Union. Militarily, Europe could participate in the international force to protect the borders; and the Europeans could also add to the stability of the region by helping with support for economic reconstruction.

Moreover, we are convinced that a Palestinian state must be connected in some form with Jordan, for a new nation which needs all our help will have to be propped up. But if the Palestinians insist on a complete national sovereignty, then they should get together with us and with the Israelis to discuss the relevant security questions. Here too the Europeans and the Americans can assist, especially in guaranteeing all the existing frontiers, so that the Israelis can have their fears allayed about an Arab Palestine which would be aimed at them or would constitute a Russian bridgehead.

—What do you think of the proposals of Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Fahd—and of Arafat's political adviser Atif Safieh—which are concerned with the recognition of Israel and of relationships with the Jewish State?

SADAT: It is very easy to sit in Jidda or in Beirut and to demand that the Israelis get out of the occupied territories—and to insist that the Americans finally put a bit of extra pressure on the Israelis. But if one is serious about peace negotiations and wants to get involved, then something more is called for than mere demands.

—But these points of departure, Fahd's plan and the Arafat model, do not differ very much from that of the Camp David treaty. . . .

SADAT: I don't find that very surprising since Arabs often find the names of things more important than their content.

—In Israel it seems that more and more people identify the peace with Egypt with the man Anwar el-Sadat. They fear that a govermental change might mean an end of the peace treaty.

SADAT: Prime Minister Menachem Begin has already countered this fear on my behalf: our determination to make peace was a strategic decision. Even if the Palestinians and the Arabs stay away after April 1982, our policy of peace will be continued.

—In the meantime the danger of war has come closer. The Iranian air force has attacked oil fields in Kuwait; and the Gulf States are reluctant to be defended by the Americans.

SADAT: That is exactly the awful situation. If it comes to the crunch then they are counting on defence by the Americans, but they don't dare to say so openly because they are afraid of the Palestinians and the Syrians. The situation in the Gulf is indeed dangerous. Who is there to prevent the Persians going off tomorrow to bomb the Saudi Arabian oilfields, which are not much further away than Kuwait. . . .?

—You have offered military installations to the Americans. . . .

SADAT: Not bases, only facilities at military installations. I have also made this offer to the West Europeans in the event that the Gulf States need assistance.

—Iraq, now in unhappy conflict with Iran, has already received Egyptian military aid. Will you be continuing this support of Bagdad?

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SADAT: In the October war of 1973 Saddam Hussein sent me—and free of charge—Soviet rockets. When he began to experience with the Russians exactly what we had already experienced, I had to fill the munitions gap which the Russians left.

I am an Arab and an Egyptian—yes, more Egyptian than Arab, and I follow the precepts of our Egyptian ethos by showing my gratitude to the Iraqis with military aid in a moment of need. I am not supporting them in their war against Islamic Iran but only helping them in their dire straits.

—What of the tense situation along the border of your southern neighbour and ally, Sudan, involving occupied Chad and your arch-enemy Gaddafi?

SADAT: Yes, the Sudan is seriously threatened by Libya, and I do reckon with an armed conflict which can break out at any moment. But the Sudan and Egypt are one, and the smallest aggression would cause Egypt to move with full force.

—Aren't you afraid that such a war might escalate into a Middle East confrontation of the Superpowers?

SADAT: This confrontation is already in full swing. Some months ago Brezhnev suggested sending Soviet troops to the Gulf as part of an international action. But what do the Soviets want in the Gulf? It is bad enough that they invaded Afghanistan.

—But what, then, does Egypt want in Afghanistan? It's well known that you are helping the Afghan freedom-fighters. Not so well known is that you, at American request, have been flying-in your old Soviet weapons in US airplanes to assist the Afghan resistance. Your disclosure of this rather embarrassed the Pentagon. . . .

SADAT: This was for the benefit of the whole Islamic world, and I tried to show to the Moslems who are our friends and who are our enemies. The Moslems must learn to stop talking out of both sides of their mouth. Look at the Islamic state of Pakistan. Under the influence of the demented Khomeini, a Pakistani mob burned down the US Embassy and murdered two American diplomats; now Pakistan receives, from this same America, arms in the amount of three billion dollars to help the country defend itself against the Soviets in neighbouring Afghanistan.

As for the next crisis, I expect it in the Sudan and, of course, in Iran.

—Do you foresee any further Soviet offensive, say in Azerbaijan?

SADAT: Why not? That's entirely possible. But before that the Leftists in Iran will topple Khomeini.

—Although they only constitute a minority?

SADAT: Organised minorities are always very dangerous.

السيد/ محمد حسني مبارك
نائب رئيس الجمهورية
باسم جماهير الإسكندرية
وأمانة حزبه الوطني الديمقراطي
ومجالسه الشعبية المحلية والأجهزة التنفيذية ..
أتقدم لسيادتكم أن جماهير الإسكندرية .. شيوخاً ورجالاً وشباباً ونساءً .. على يقين بأنكم أقدر الرجال على حمل راية مصر الخالدة لترتفع دوماً فوق هامات المجد كما أراد لها زعيمنا المؤمن أبو الشهداء محمد أنور السادات فقد كنت رفيق نضاله العظيم وكنت معه على درب مسيرته الظافرة المنصورة برجالها الأبرار .. واليوم بروح السادات الأمين الذي اختارك معه في مسيرته الرائعة ... نؤيدك ونعاهد مصر .. الوقوف معك صفاً واحداً صامداً .. فامض على بركة الله .. وعاشت مصر قوية برجالها الأوفياء .
فريد/ محمد سعيد الماحي محافظ الإسكندرية

OBITUARY NOTICE IN AL-AHRAM (*Cairo*)

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POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Refugees in the '30s

"A Body, a Soul, a Passport . . ."

By Michael R. Marrus

> *"It is a fantastic commentary on the inhumanity of our times that for thousands and thousands of people a piece of paper with a stamp on it is the difference between life and death, and that scores of people have blown their brains out because they couldn't get it. . . ."*
>
> DOROTHY THOMPSON (1938)

READING Hannah Arendt's *Origins of Totalitarianism* many years ago, I puzzled over her dark and (to me) abstruse discussion of statelessness. Even allowing for the exaggerations or philosophical abstractions to which she was given, I found it difficult to grasp the truly cosmic significance she assigned to an apparently technical question. Statelessness, she wrote, was "much more stubborn in fact and much more far-reaching in consequence" than the vexed problem of minorities in post-World-War-I Europe; stateless persons were "the most symptomatic group in contemporary politics." Like a contagious disease, statelessness swept through European countries which had once paid homage to the Rights of Man. Stateless persons were deprived of all human rights, belonged to no human community, had taken away from them "some of the most essential characteristics of human life." Statelessness demonstrated the nation-state's awesome responsibility to guarantee those qualities which are specifically human; its spread was one of the first and most important signs of the disintegration of liberal civilisation, heralding the new totalitarian ethos of the 20th century.

More than fifteen years after reading those lines I came to appreciate some of the horror which the loss of citizenship inspired in a whole generation of Europeans—including Hannah Arendt herself, who fled from Hitlerian Germany to France, and escaped to the United States in 1941. While researching the shabby tale of Vichy France's policy towards the Jews, and in particular while looking into the background to war-time persecution in the events of the 1930s, I came across appalling manifestations of the trend she described.

Alien to most of us who had no direct experience of pre-war Europe, statelessness was a curse unique to the inter-War period both in its dramatic profusion and its dire implications. That is why those who lived through that era often approach the subject with reverence, akin almost to dread. An oddity in international law, and an unplanned nightmare for officialdom, statelessness first appeared as a legal accident. By the 1930s, however, it became a widely-used weapon, punishing its victims through the remarkable collusion of cruel dictatorships and impotent liberal societies, too numbed by their own problems to relieve the sufferings of tens of thousands of people. While the fate of the stateless eventually merged with other refugees, they remained the most vulnerable, the least cared for, inspiring particular dismay as they appeared on the doorsteps of other states.

A Russian proverb has it that every man consists of a body, a soul, and a passport. To appreciate the emblematic quality statelessness once had, it is instructive to look closely at its emergence as a mass phenomenon.

IN THE HALF-CENTURY or so before the First World War nationality was practically irrelevant in international travel. Passports were unnecessary except for a small handful of countries, and the open gates to America ultimately guaranteed a haven for the downtrodden and persecuted of Europe whatever their background or juridical status. Restrictions came only in 1914 with the outbreak of war in Europe. Since then they have never fully been lifted. Documents attesting to nationality became essential when moving across international frontiers. And when US immigration restrictions were imposed in the decade after the War, refugees and immigrants alike found formerly free avenues blocked.

In this new climate of more restricted international migration hundreds of thousands of wanderers appeared on the European continent without nationality—lacking that essential particularity with which officials now regulated passage from one country to another. Close to a million Russians who left their homes after the Bolshevik take-over were stripped of their citizenship by Soviet laws in the early 1920s. Armenian refugees were similarly dispossessed; streaming out of Turkey following hideous massacres during the war, they were denationalised by informal Turkish policy from 1923, and a sweeping statute of 1927. For these refugees and a

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few others, however, there was some hope. Thanks partly to the widespread sympathy for the latest political exiles and thanks also to the possibilities for resettlement which existed in a post-War Europe energetically engaged in reconstruction, remedies were found. Several European states offered asylum. During the late 1920s special travel documents for Russians and Armenians known as the "Nansen passports" (bearing the name of the polar explorer who was the first League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) were widely accepted in the international community.

Other groups were not so lucky. Additional stateless persons emerged from the territorial reshuffling of the Peace Settlements of 1919, despite the best efforts of those who drafted the treaties. With the establishment of new state boundaries, notably with the creation of the Baltic countries and the successor states to the Habsburg Empire, some quite ordinary people became impossible to pigeon-hole, especially once uprooted from their birthplace by the War. Thousands were transformed into international curiosities of indeterminate nationality because they could not, or would not, be placed within the supposedly ethnographic categories and frontiers sketched in Paris by the Allied and Associated Powers. Moreover, following the War-time example of a number of states, several governments passed laws denationalising subjects living abroad and deemed to be "disloyal." Increasingly large numbers of *apatrides*, as they were now called, clogged the channels of state bureaucracies attempting to deal with the international flow of refugees. This was the situation at the end of the 1920s. Two developments, at this point, made the situation dramatically worse.

THE FIRST WAS the depression which undercut the prospects for European economic growth in the early 1930s. Severe unemployment turned the mood in almost all Western countries decisively against foreigners, especially the kind of foreigners who tended to become refugees—newly propertyless middle-class professionals and business people, including dependants—dispirited, disoriented, and ill-adapted to living abroad. Governments which had been assuming important new welfare obligations to the masses of their citizenry since the War were hardly willing to take on new charges in a time of economic distress. France, for example, which had actively recruited workers abroad during the 1920s, now began to send them home in the tens of thousands.

The second factor which transformed the refugee situation was the rise to power of Nazism, spilling large numbers of new aliens on to the world market of refugees. Thousands of German Jews and political enemies of Hitlerism fled abroad. As persecution continued rather than abating, a generous attitude to even a handful of aliens was seen as likely to prompt an exodus greater than anyone could accommodate or control.

Dictatorial régimes now had wide recourse to denationalisation, attempting to isolate and expel segments of their populations. At first such governments disowned those who had been granted citizenship in recent decades; then they became more bold, turning even to those who were citizens by birth.

Following the model of fascist Italy, a German law of 1933 not only authorised the denaturalisation of Jews who had become German since 9 November 1918, but also permitted denationalisation of other *Reich* citizens living abroad—without even bothering to inform them. Austria under Dolfuss soon passed a similar law, as did Roumania and Poland in 1938. A French statute of the same year allowed denaturalisation of those "*indignes du titre de citoyen français*."

PEOPLE WITHOUT PAPERS now suffered the ill-humour of governments grown hostile and indifferent to the plight of refugees. No one felt obliged to receive them. They threatened to become permanent charges because other countries wanted no more refugees and their own countries of origin refused repatriation. Free movement virtually ceased. Thousands became stranded—Polish Jews, for example, who had sought refuge in Austria or Czechoslovakia, were delivered up to Nazi depredations following the *Anschluss* of March 1938, and the dismemberment of the Czech state after Munich several months later. Other formerly Polish Jews offered the most dramatic example of the fate of stateless persons before 1939. In the autumn of 1938, anticipating their denationalisation by Poland, the German government arrested some 15,000 Poles, a large proportion of whom were Jews, and unceremoniously dumped them at the Polish border. Having denied their citizenship, the Poles refused to accept many of these unfortunates, 7,000 of whom languished for almost a year in the no-man's-land village of Zbonsyn, kept alive only by charitable donations of food from private relief agencies abroad.[1]

Once only a vexatious technicality, the loss of citizenship soon became a crippling handicap in a race for a secure and stable existence. Hitler's con-

[1] The son of two of the deportees was a Jewish youth named Herschel Grynszpan, who in response to this deportation assassinated an official of the German Embassy in Paris, Ernst vom Rath. This killing became the occasion and the excuse for *Kristallnacht*, a wild Nazi pogrom against Jews thoughout the *Reich* on 9–10 November 1938, prompting in turn a new exodus of Jews from Central Europe.

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sular officials abroad actively harassed Jewish refugees during the late 1930s, rendering them *de facto* stateless by withholding necessary documents; other authorities simply confiscated passports of unwanted foreigners who had committed the slightest breach of the law. Some refugees simply ignored their loss of citizenship, only to find that their passports, once expired, could not be renewed. Unafraid of retaliation by other states, governments denied to the stateless the right to work. Everywhere, doors closed. Without a passport refugees could not stay at a hotel, could not enter a hospital, dared not approach the police. With a punctilious, almost Kafkesque formality they were progressively excluded from the sphere of civil society. This befell not only newcomers, but also many who had lived abroad for years, often having sunk deep roots in the societies in which they resided. And finally, despite the legal and logical impediments in the way of summary expulsion of refugees (known as *refoulement*) to countries which had not agreed to receive them, officials and police sometimes stealthily bundled hapless individuals across their borders into a neighbouring country.

BLOCKED AT EVERY TURN, stateless refugees were especially prey to demoralisation and despair—themes which haunt so much of *émigré* literature of the period. The stock figure of "the German refugees" in these years was a shabby, unwanted person, seated stiffly and alone all day at a café: reading and rereading a German newspaper, uncomfortable in any language but his own, incapable of earning a living or of participating in the affairs of the host society. Many were turned into mendicants, surviving only because of charitable agencies willing to extend a hand. Some lived a clandestine existence, resorting to crime, forging passports, visas and personal documents, bribing officials, and assuming false identities. Generally speaking, stateless refugees were forced into that very posture of illicit activity and secretive behaviour which was so much a part of anti-foreign and anti-Semitic propaganda. Still others, paralysed or shattered by the experience, committed suicide. The writer Stefan Zweig was perhaps the most famous of these, ending his life in Brazil. But there were many more, including Ernst Toller, Kurt Tucholsky, Josef Roth.

CONSIDER THE CASE OF France, the most important country of refuge during much of the 1930s, the most common staging-area for settlement elsewhere, and the nation which traditionally celebrated its generosity towards persecuted exiles.

Stateless refugees first appeared in France with the Russian emigration after 1918, when Paris became known as "the Mecca of Russian intellectual pilgrimage." The prestige of France among those in flight was immeasurable. When the US diplomat Henry Morgenthau visited bedraggled colonies of White Russians in China in the mid-1920s he was greeted by a Czarist military band playing . . . *The Marseillaise*. France continued to receive European exiles of many nationalities. In the 1920s anti-fascist Italians arrived in great numbers, often deprived of their citizenship by Mussolini's denationalisation law of 1926, a vindictive assault on the régime's enemies fleeing abroad. And finally, in 1933, came refugees from Nazism, flocking to France but expecting a speedy return to their homes as soon as Hitler had been ousted from power.

As the hope for restoration of democracy in Germany receded, the climate for foreigners worsened in a France weakened by economic troubles and civil disturbances. Hostility mounted with "the Stavisky scandal" in early 1934, contributing to the violent mood on the extreme Right which culminated in the massive riots of 6 February. Then came the assassination of foreign minister Louis Barthou and King Alexander of Yugoslavia by Croatian terrorists in October of the same year. Official support for many of these outcasts weakened catastrophically. Although some effort was made to help the refugees by Léon Blum's Socialist-led "Popular Front", anti-foreign feeling and a heightened anti-Semitism took a heavy toll by the second half of the decade. In 1938 a turn to the right in politics signalled the end of French toleration of refugees.

Prior to this, foreigners were regularly expelled, especially workers from nearby countries; but refugees normally managed to stay despite being bombarded with official threats. Refugees frequently received orders from the police on bluish pink or violet paper, refusing permission to remain in France. Yet such notices did not signify a final decision to expel. In what Arthur Koestler once called "a new, refined form of torture", refugees were expected to appeal to the Ministry of Interior for the right to stay, a process which took enormous lengths of time, and throughout which they were relatively safe. During the period of appeal the police affixed a special stamp on the refusal to sojourn or issued a new document indicating a reprieve; expulsion was only possible upon the issue of a direct order, signed by the Minister himself. Close to 200,000 foreigners lived precariously in this way from month to month, satisfying the authorities as to their activities and whereabouts, evading an unknown fate if the order to expel were to be executed, and hoping that it would ultimately be cancelled. Of course, the stateless were the most vulnerable appellants, for

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they were physically incapable of leaving France for another country. In practice, the government only sometimes recognised their plight, and they were constantly menaced by imprisonment for refusing to obey an expulsion order.

SO MATTERS STOOD until May 1938, when a decree-law of the Daladier government upset all previous arrangements and threw the refugee world into chaos. The critical provision of this statute was the immediate application of penal sanctions to recipients of police refusals of sojourn.[2] Courts were not even empowered to suspend sentences in difficult cases; imprisonment from one month to a year was mandatory. Within a year close to 10,000 were jailed. Refugees now besieged the Ministry of Interior and *Prèfectures de police*, swamping these offices with petitions to cancel expulsion orders. In subsequent months repression intensified. The German émigré Theodor Balk described the scene on the fifth floor of the Préfecture in Paris: long queues of anxious and bewildered refugees assembling hours before the offices opened, each awaiting the fateful judgment. How long the reprieve? Sometimes a few days, sometimes a few weeks. Sometimes an order to leave France before midnight.[3]

In November 1938 the French government was authorised to set up gangs to "concentrate" the refugees; new rules bristled with sanctions, and drew increasingly sharp lines between those living in a "*situation régulière*" and those who fell outside the law.

Refugees from Nazi Germany, in company with a substantial number of exiles from Eastern European countries, found it increasingly difficult to maintain a legal presence in France, to keep within the law and to satisfy the authorities. Most had been granted a right to be in France for a few months after having declared to an official at the frontier that they were political refugees. When it became increasingly difficult to remain in the country, many sought visas to travel elsewhere. Then the applicants ran into a wall of refusals, or more often a lengthy application procedure which squandered weeks, months, and eventually years of effort. Meanwhile, their passports expired. Respectable, bourgeois families, often fastidiously law-abiding in the countries from which they came, were turned into outlaws—unable to leave, unable to stay legally where they were.

Throughout this tortuous journey in the land of bureaucracy, the surest path to illegality was the loss of citizenship. For without a passport, or as more often the case with an expired passport and no possibility of its renewal, individuals found increasingly difficult operations virtually impossible to perform—passing international borders, securing a right to sojourn, travelling freely to obtain the required stamps and documents, finding work, evading prison, or securing a visa for escape elsewhere.

IN FRANCE the vulnerability of stateless persons was even more evident than elsewhere because of the great numbers of *apatrides* living there. France was one of the very last places from which to escape the tightening vice of persecution of the German *Reich*, and the last governments of the Third Republic, feeling swamped with refugees (especially Jews), imposed upon them a crushing series of decrees and *ordonnances*—most of which were later picked up and refined by the collaborationist régime of Vichy. Before the outbreak of war stateless persons found their situation deteriorating to one of perpetual illegality. Even after being released from prison they could be re-arrested, served with expulsion orders which were impossible to obey, and hence re-arrested once more. In his massive survey of the refugee problem published in 1939, Sir John Hope Simpson cited spectacular cases of multiple convictions in France—a Russian refugee convicted 27 times, after which he died of tuberculosis; another Russian convicted on 32 occasions; and an Italian tailor who had been convicted 29 times and had served over nine years in prison.[4]

THE FRENCH AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS were particularly embarrassed by the stateless because it was so difficult to get rid of them. This explains the failure of numerous efforts by the League of Nations to extend juridical protection to stateless refugees during the late 1920s and 1930s. Despite widespread agreement that statelessness was an especially cruel and inhuman anomaly, states refused to conclude binding agreements to clear up some of the most outrageous problems it created. All efforts for reform were predicated on the notion that states would have to assume responsibility for these people, but virtually every government was reluctant to surrender its ultimate right to dispose of the stateless as it chose.

War-time conditions only worsened the plight of the stateless, both in the Allied camp, where they

[2] The law also provided for the dispatch of refugees to "assigned residence" in remote parts of France if they could not be repatriated. Paradoxically, however, this potentially helpful provision was not extended to foreigners and stateless refugees affected by refusals of sojourn, and restrictive regulations virtually invalidated the measure before 1939.

[3] *Das Verlorene Manuskript* (Berlin, 1949), pp. 135–42; Gilbert Badia *et al., Les barbelés de l'exil* (Grenoble, 1979).

[4] *The Refugee Problem: Report of a Survey* (London, 1939), p. 254.

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were interned, often for years, and in occupied Europe, where the bitterness of defeat at the hands of the Germans frequently accentuated pre-War recriminations against outsiders. The ideal remained "to get rid of them." Throughout the early period of Nazi occupation in France, for example, the French government at Vichy thrust stateless Jews and other undesirables across the demarcation line to the German zone, and counted itself lucky on the very rare occasions when the Germans accepted them. Preparing itself to eject even more, Vichy undertook a vast programme of denationalisation of those who had been naturalised since 1927!

The culmination of official indifference to the fate of the stateless came in 1942 when the Nazis began to implement their plans to murder all the Jews in Europe. As part of the preparations, the Nazis issued a sweeping decree in November 1941 denationalising every *Reich* Jew living abroad. Seeking help everywhere for the tremendous task ahead, Hitler's officials astutely exploited the common sentiment against the stateless.

Knowing how unwelcome were *apatrides* everywhere, the Germans sweetened their deportation quotas with a remarkable proposition: stateless Jews would go first. This offer was particularly potent in Western Europe where the bulk of stateless Jews concentrated—governments or administrations in Central or Eastern Europe generally needed no prompting whatsoever to surrender the stateless in their midst. In conjunction with a widespread dislike of Jews, the offer proved devastatingly seductive. In France René Bousquet, chief of the French police, had in fact proposed this very idea to Heydrich when the *SS*-leader visited Paris in May 1942; in Holland and Belgium similar arrangements were made before the trains began to roll. Nearly everywhere, indeed, the stateless were deported before the others; in Western Europe their murder helped assure for the Germans the widespread assistance required for "the Final Solution." After the War, as if to convince themselves and their accusers that the damage they did was "limited", French collaborators sometimes claimed erroneously that hardly any but the stateless had been sent on the dreadful deportations "to the east."

STATELESSNESS was, therefore, more than "a technical matter." It certified the unwillingness of even liberal states to extend the protection of human rights beyond a circle tightly drawn by law and the accidents of birth. It illustrated how brittle were the ideals which Western societies claimed to uphold, and how vulnerable people could become once excluded from the juridical bonds of nations. However worthy the occasional interventions of reformers, these were incapable of preventing a bureaucratic hell for thousands of people. By 1942 "statelessness" even became a licence to murder. Few of those who lent a hand in the Nazis' deportation of their victims actually desired so horrendous a solution to the problem which had festered since the 1930s. But few also had any other solution to propose.

SOME SYMPTOMS PASS, even if the disease remains unchanged. For the 1930s, Hannah Arendt quite rightly singled out the treatment of stateless refugees as indicative of liberal democratic failings. Following the defeat of Nazism and the revulsion against the Hitlerian genocide, many states moved slowly to protect those who were once so vulnerable. Under the aegis of the United Nations, international conventions were signed relating to the status of refugees (1951) and the status of stateless persons (1954). These multilateral agreements, complemented by a Protocol of 1967, prohibited the unreasonable penalising of refugees, even those who entered a country illegally. Expulsion of refugees was similarly precluded if it threatened life or freedom. The states agreed to issue identity papers and travel documents similar to the old "Nansen passports." In other cases—as with Ugandan Asians in 1972—emergency papers were issued by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Unfortunately, these new moves remain limited both by international politics and by the shift of global refugee movements. For one thing, the various "rights" accorded to refugees by international agreements only apply once a signatory state has granted a refugee permanent asylum. Nothing obliges a state to grant asylum. As of December 1981, 89 states had ratified the 1951 Convention and 88 had done so for the 1967 Protocol. The Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc countries solidly abstain—nursing deep post-War grievances about the flow of refugees to the West, and doubtless fearing the implications at home of a greater freedom for dissenters. Moreover, in other geographic areas refugees remain almost entirely unprotected. In the Middle East only Israel, Iran, Egypt and the Yemen had acceded to each instrument. And while in Africa "the Organisation for African Unity" has gone far to build protection for refugees into government practice, in most of Asia and South-east Asia such policies are utterly ignored. Apart from Japan and the Philippines, no state in either region has ratified these agreements. Hundreds of thousands of refugees in this part of the globe have been cast adrift—figuratively and literally.

As in the Europe of the 1930s, portions of mankind are still being made superfluous.

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DISCUSSION

The Mountbatten "Conspiracy"

Was It a "Non-Story"?

By Louis Heren

NONE OF US is infallible, not even H. H. the Pope except in faith and morals. *The Times* is no less fallible than other newspapers. We try hard to be objective and get the facts right; we really do, but after a lifetime of reporting I know that facts can be elusive. We cannot always hope to report what really happened.

The reasons are obvious. Apart from the laws of libel and contempt, the journalist is an outsider. He is rarely present when the events he must report actually occur. He is dependent upon sources who may only tell him what they want him to know; or they are indifferent witnesses even when they are speaking the truth.

The journalist will check and recheck, but when he finally sits down to write his piece, often under the pressure of a deadline, he must accept that he has probably only learned part of the story. He must present the story as such. He must not misinform, or suggest that he knows more than he does, because in a way he is writing for history. This is the ultimate discipline, the beginning of humility and perhaps wisdom; and it stood us in good stead when *The Times* decided to investigate what Lord Cudlipp described in ENCOUNTER (September 1981) as the so-called military coup of 1968.

We decided to investigate because we knew that in this age of uncertainty many people would be prepared to believe the allegations of conspiracy published elsewhere. Indeed, without being pompous it was our duty to investigate because all the available evidence, including Cudlipp's book *Walking on the Water*, suggested that something very odd had taken place when Cudlipp and Mr Cecil King met Lord Mountbatten on 8 May 1968.

The reason for the meeting was obscure. Cudlipp wrote that he was invited to Broadlands, where Mountbatten expressed disquiet over the state of the country; but he did not explain why Mountbatten agreed or asked to meet King, an influential and controversial newspaper executive whose dissatisfaction with the Wilson government was well known and potentially embarrassing for somebody in Mountbatten's position.

LOUIS HEREN *was Deputy Editor of "The Times" in London before his recent retirement. Among his books are "Growing Up Poor in London" (1973), "The Story of America" (1976), and "Growing Up on The Times" (1978).*

I HAD KNOWN Mountbatten in India, and his political ambitions certainly went beyond being the last Viceroy and first Governor General of India. A very senior member of his staff described him as "Tricky Dicky"—this was before Richard Nixon had emerged from Congressional obscurity—and quit in disgust. Mountbatten had also denied one of my reports on the Punjab massacres, although he knew that it was substantially correct.

This proved nothing. Mountbatten was a born leader, and more intelligent than most of the great captains of the Second World War. It would have been strange if he had not entertained political ambition in the late 1940s, a period when he was much admired by members of the Attlee government. He was certainly not the first or last public figure to question my professional integrity for reasons which he no doubt thought were more important than my reputation.

Nevertheless, these memories tended to confirm my suspicion that Cudlipp's account of the meeting was no more complete than most of the stories I had written, but for different reasons. As I have said, in such circumstances a journalist can only report what he is told, but Cudlipp was at the meeting. He was a witness, and after 46 years of active service in journalism should have taken a mental note of what was said and then committed it to paper afterwards.

This is a basic journalistic procedure when notebooks are inappropriate, but apparently Cudlipp did not dictate a memo to himself after the meeting. More surprising, he was happy to accept and publish Mountbatten's version of what was said. He also deleted a passage at Mountbatten's request. Hardly in the splendid *Daily Mirror* tradition of "Publish and Be Damned" (incidentally the title of an earlier book of his).

Another witness, King, did in fact record his version of what happened at the meeting. One of our writers, Dan van der Vat, was allowed to see his diary, and King's version was different from that agreed to by Mountbatten and Cudlipp. There was no mention of Lord Zuckerman accusing him of rank treachery.

CUDLIPP WROTE in ENCOUNTER that King was a man of invincible integrity. He accepted King's denial and suggested that he did not hear Zuckerman because he was hard of hearing. Alas, he did

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not tell us that at the time, but the fact that Zuckerman told us that he was appalled by what King had said, and that he did accuse him of rank treachery, was sufficient justification to continue the enquiry.

We established to the best of our abilities that there had been no talk of a *coup d'état*. We published what we had learned, without any suggestion that where there was smoke there must be fire. Our disciplines were strictly observed.

Perhaps it was a non-story and not worth the immense effort put into it; but I disagree. It might have been otherwise, and we did allay suspicions that there had been a plot. We also plumbed the depths of unease which pervaded Whitehall at the time, which was surely of public interest.

Rumours that Cecil King was a key figure in a *putsch* may not have reached Hugh Cudlipp, but many of the men we interviewed remembered this and other disturbing rumours. Some may have been nothing more than "loose talk by gin-sodden generals", as a former director-general of the MI5 remarked to us; but it would seem that they were taken seriously enough to be investigated by the security service.

CUDLIPP protested too much. He was angered by the wild reports of the alleged coup, perhaps because he still admired King. He was entitled to be angry, but not with *The Times*. We interviewed King, and persuaded him to give us his recorded version of what happened. Hugh Cudlipp would have written a better book if he had done the same instead of only accepting Mountbatten's version of what was supposed to have happened.

A Reply

By Lord Zuckerman

LORD CUDLIPP'S article (ENCOUNTER, September 1981) reaffirms his already published account of the meeting which he arranged in 1968 between the late Lord Mountbatten and Mr Cecil King, and at which I was present; and there is no need for me to comment on his critical observations about the embroidered stories which his *Walking on the Water* stimulated, and about the standards of veracity of newspapers. Equally I would not wish to say anything that might be taken to imply that the historical importance of the "affair" is not as profound as some have assumed. But in Lord Cudlipp's effort to reconcile his own record with Mr King's contrary version of what happened, he has, I fear, added an unnecessary dimension to the differences—of which he says the major one was the reason for my departure—that separate the two accounts.

Lord Cudlipp clearly heard all that I said at the meeting, and has reported verbatim my only contribution to the discussion. But he now writes that Mr King might not have heard because I speak "softly" (which will come as a surprise to many of my friends); that Mr King's hearing "is not perfect at all ranges"; and that he was "seven or more yards" from me when I spoke. However deaf Mr King may be, I fear that Lord Cudlipp's memory of the room in which we met is inaccurate.

Mr King and I were barely two yards apart. In round figures the room measures some six-and-a-half yards by four-and-a-half. Its long axis is at right angles to the street, on to which two windows open. To the side of the narrow space between the two windows was Lord Mountbatten's desk. The door into the room is on the wall opposite to the windows, and beside it was a small dining-table. Against each of the longer side walls, in the area between desk and dining-table, was a small sofa, with an armchair at one end of each. There was a small table beside both of these chairs, and between the two sofas a coffee-table.

I was the last to arrive, and when I entered the room Lord Mountbatten was in the chair close to the sofa on which Mr King and Lord Cudlipp were sitting. I took the chair that faced him. I was no more than an arm's length from Lord Mountbatten, who was even closer to Mr King. If Mr King and I had been seven or more yards apart, he would have had to be leaning out of the window and I would have been outside the room. It would have been a different matter if Lord Cudlipp had said seven feet, but at that range Mr King could not have failed to hear.

Lord Cudlipp now writes that I might have over-reacted to what Mr King had been saying. I do not think so. Nor did I misunderstand Mr King's words. When Lord Mountbatten asked me to comment on what Mr King had been saying, I made the observation which Lord Cudlipp has recorded—but certainly not, as he writes, from the door. In the letter which he sent Lord Cudlipp, commenting on the latter's first draft of the story, Lord Mountbatten noted that I made my "statement" before I left the room—I had, in fact, started to talk

LORD ZUCKERMAN *held various scientific advisory posts to RAF Combined Operations from 1939–46, and has since been a chief scientific adviser to the British Government. He is Professor Emeritus of the Universities of Birmingham and of East Anglia, a Trustee of the British Museum (Natural History), and President of the Zoological Society of London. Among his books are "Scientists and War" (1966), "The Image of Technology" (1968), and "Beyond the Ivory Tower" (1970).*

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while still in my chair, and ended my remarks as I stood up. It was only then that I walked to the door. But even if I had spoken from near to the door, I would not have been more than three or so yards from Mr King. Mr King would have had to be very deaf indeed not to have heard what I said. I had no doubt about the intent of what he had been saying, even though I do not recall—and here I certainly agree with Lord Cudlipp—that the words "military coup" were ever used.

As Lord Cudlipp has written, Mr King had been talking about what he saw as the imminent disintegration of Harold Wilson's democratically-elected government; about the likelihood of civil disorder following, with bloodshed on the streets; about the possible need to call in the armed forces; and about machine-guns at street corners. Lord Cudlipp relates that Mr King went on to say "that people would be looking to somebody like Lord Mountbatten as the titular head of a new administration", ending by asking whether Lord Mountbatten would agree to be the titular head of, presumably, a non-democratically-elected administration. Call it what you will, this talk sounded to me like an invitation to participate in an act of treachery or treason. Maybe I used the wrong word. But that is what I said. Shortly after I left the room, Lord Cudlipp records that Lord Mountbatten ended the meeting by saying that he entirely agreed with what I had said. He then ushered his visitors out. Obviously I was not there for this brief final period of the proceedings.

During the time I was in the room, Lord Cudlipp did not say a word. He has confirmed the testimony of Lord Mountbatten and of the latter's personal assistant, Mr John Barratt, that he and Mr King were shown out immediately after I had left. What puzzles me, therefore, is how Mr King can at the same time be correct when (as Lord Cudlipp writes) he says that *after* I left, "Mountbatten said he had been lunching at the Horse Guards and that morale in the armed forces had never been so low. He said that the Queen was receiving an unprecedented number of petitions, all of which have to be passed on to the Home Office", etc. etc.

In the course of a conversation which Lord Mountbatten and I had on the following day, he made it clear that he greatly regretted that he had ever consented to the meeting.

A Short History of India 1175–1975

The ochre air irritates
the tongue. Dust thickens it.
The squalid city groans

under the loo, familiar
as an ordinary afternoon in May.
It's a cemetery of stones

I see everywhere:
Khaljis, Tughluqs, Lodis, Mughals—
they stick to its face

like turds. When Ghazni knocked
or was it Clive, we paid off
old scores in our backyard.

Eight hundred years of blood-letting
has made eunuchs of us,
once for all unsettled

our minds. Now, atop the Himalaya
unceremoniously grins
an ominous skull, the sun.

R. Parthasarathy

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Of Fathers & Sons . . . The Threats against Djilas

Belgrade

MILOVAN DJILAS is gravely worried about the safety of his 28-year-old son Aleksa who is at present living in London after completing his studies in philosophy in Graz, Vienna and London. Djilas has received letters from America threatening his son's life—letters which Djilas sees as part of a Yugoslav secret service intrigue. Additional proof of this can be seen, according to Djilas, in the fact that recently attacks against him in the Yugoslav media have increased. Only recently Vladimir Dedijer, whose history of Tito's life and the Partisan war is the official version, called Djilas "an inveterate murderer." And, last Friday, Kolj Siroka, President of the "Socialist League of the Working People", demanded that Djilas be "deprived of the right to make statements hostile to the state."

In spite of the nine years prison sentence to which he was condemned by Tito's judges after 1954, Djilas has been allowed a fairly free hand over the last fifteen years—i.e. during Tito's lifetime—to publish his political views in the West. He still has not been given a passport. It is well known that while there are today people in the Party leadership who would willingly opt for a "dialogue" with dissident critics like Djilas in the Yugoslav media, there are others who are literally beside themselves with rage at the "liberties" which Djilas is allowed to get away with—especially since the publication of his biography of Tito, published immediately after Tito's death. Djilas has now given Western press correspondents the following (slightly abbreviated) text.

ON 26 APRIL 1981, Mr George Urban telephoned me from London to say that he had received a letter from Chicago, which contained threats against the life of my son Aleksa. My son was to be murdered unless I declared myself ready "to cooperate" and to disclose—in an interview with Mr Urban—all the "secrets" of the slaughter of "Serbs" by "the Communist beasts." I was given until 31 December 1981 to cooperate. In the same letter threats were also made against Mr Urban should the contents of the letter be made public. . . .

The letter, postmarked Chicago, also contained some rigmarole about my "participation" in crimes about which I know nothing, and which Mr Urban had been too tactful to mention on the telephone. In my published memoirs I told the whole story, good and bad, of what I did during my revolutionary Communist past.[1]

If I now see myself, rather against my inclination, forced to turn to Western public opinion, it is not out of any desire to whitewash my actions, but rather because of my feelings as a father. Why—and why at this precise moment—should such letters be written and such threats be made? And why against my son? All is not clear to me—how could it be?—and I can give no complete answer to these questions.

But the following facts are very significant: the demand contained in the letter that I should cooperate with émigré circles and expose "Communist crimes" would provide a semblance of "evidence" for my "indictment". . . .

But it is not this that concerns me. It is not by chance that threats are made against my son at this time, for over the last year in London he has written and published a number of political articles in Western periodicals which offer critical analyses of the situation in Yugoslavia. Nor is it by chance that my son has been threatened immediately after being publicly attacked by such leading figures as Dolanc and Bilic as a "Chetnik" and an "émigré" (although he is 28 years of age, did his military service in Yugoslavia eighteen months ago, and is in possession of a Yugoslav passport). Nor is it by chance that the journal *Vjesnik* (3 October 1981) brings up the name of my son in an article directed against terrorism. Isn't the purpose of all this to prepare public opinion for a crime to be committed against my son?

CERTAINLY THERE ARE among the émigrés sinister and irresponsible elements. But these people are far less likely to be aggravated by my son's critical studies of Yugoslavia than the Yugoslav régime and its political agencies.

But let me repeat: my son belongs to no organisation, either public or secret. He has nothing to do with extremist ideas or methods of violence; he is committed to democracy and the methods of peace. The undemocratic discriminations and pressures which surrounded him from childhood onwards have taught him to seek the path of freedom by subjecting undemocratic institutions to critical analysis. Any father would be proud of a son such as mine, and this is one reason why I wish to alert public opinion to the threats made against him—threats which are based on the alleged guilt of his father.

Milovan Djilas
in DIE PRESSE (*Vienna*)

[1] See also, in ENCOUNTER (December 1979), George Urban's interview with Milovan Djilas.—ED. NOTE.

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LETTERS

"Marvellous"

BERNARD BERGONZI's review in the July ENCOUNTER of my book *Fiction as Wisdom: From Goethe to Bellow* opens with a sneer at the book's first sentence. In a period when critics delight, not in fiction, but in "theories of fiction" (the title of his omnibus review), I dare to begin, "This is a book about my experiences with some marvellous novels"! That from "an American university press in 1980"—that old-fashioned naivety, he seems to mean. But the naivety is Mr Bergonzi's. He has missed the point that the sentence's unfashionableness—its unclever assertion of my pleasure in the fiction—is deliberate. It is a deliberate rejection of self-glorifying cleverness like his own, and of the provincial assumption underlying it that what glorifies is the chic—and the portentous. And it is a deliberate avowal of that "affectionate partiality" which Goethe, in a remark quoted in the same paragraph, said criticism must issue from to be of real value. The point might have got through to him if he had read, or understood, the next few sentences. In them I speak of the kind of criticism now dominating "the literature *profession*", a kind which ignores what really matters to us in literature and turns criticism into a boring, jargon-ridden parade of "expertise."

But the review is worse than provincial. It is dishonest. Mr Bergonzi, quoting from the beginning and the end, pretends to have read enough of the book in between to describe its method—and gives himself away by describing it wrong. He says "its critical method doesn't go much beyond close plot summary combined with genial reflections." But not only are the book's few plot summaries essential data for fresh interpretations of plots that have been misread; most of the essays (those on *Elective Affinities, The Brothers Karamazov, The Counterfeiters, The Blithedale Romance*, and others) stay "close" only to the novels' central visions, referring to their contents piecemeal, as the argument requires. For this *is* a book of fresh interpretations of important novels. The interpretations may be wrong—or beside the point—but the praise of Trilling, Wilder, Bellow, et al. (put on the jacket by the publisher, not as Mr Bergonzi ungenerously assumes, by the complacent author) surely suggests they're at least worth arguing with. Your reviewer doesn't even hint at their existence because, after smiling at that first sentence, he didn't pause long enough in his skimming to notice what the essays are about.

I realise such a retort to one's critic is usually unwise. I take the risk in order to say a word against that smug provincialism of the fashionable. And also as a reminder that the intellectual life too has its morality, though Mr Bergonzi doesn't seem to know it.

IRVIN STOCK

Brookline
Massachusetts

A Reply

MR STOCK does me an injustice if he thinks that I read only the beginning and end of his book before writing about it; as a reviewer I am accustomed to being more conscientious than that. He says I have missed the point about his opening sentence: "This is a book about my experiences with some marvellous novels."

The point I took, and I think it is the right one, is that these words reveal a combination of old-style belletrism ("my experiences") and slack reliance on the clichés of reviewing ("marvellous novels"). To this extent they are indicative of Mr Stock's tone and manner. He rejoices in being unfashionable, and has every right to be so, though perhaps not quite so complacently. I too, as earlier remarks in my article should have made clear, dislike the excesses of quasi-technological criticism and prefer a humanistic approach to literature. But I persist in finding it only very inadequately exemplified in Mr Stock's laborious, long-winded book.

BERNARD BERGONZI

Warwick

Crucial Issues

THE ASSERTION made by Dennis J. O'Keefe in his letter about George Orwell's writings (October) that the most crucial issue of our times is "the relationship between the individual and the state" is mistaken.

This relationship is the most crucial *political* issue. The most crucial issue of our and all times is the relationship between the individual and God.

That many have attempted to make the state into a god (as the letter shows in its brilliant comments on *Nineteen Eighty-Four*) and others have made it an anti-god emphasises the truth of my assertion.

SAMUEL WOLF

London

Charlton's History of Britain & Europe

MICHAEL CHARLTON's intriguing article (ENCOUNTER, August) on "How and Why Britain Lost the Leadership of Europe" leaves one important question unanswered. Did the British Cabinet instruct Mr Russell Bretherton, who during the summer and autumn of 1955 was representing the UK in the Spaak Committee of experts created by the Six Foreign Ministers at the Messina Conference, to withdraw from the conference? Or was Mr Bretherton "excluded" in the course of a "dramatic" exchange of views?

I was one of the Italian delegates in Brussels at the time, as well as in the subsequent restricted meetings at rue de le Loi from which the Spaak Report emerged; and finally in the Val Duchesse conference, of whose institutional and drafting committee I was chairman. I very well remember having been present at the meeting of the Steering Committee when Mr Bretherton delivered his last statement, after which—in Robert Rothschild's words—"he disappeared and never was seen again. . . ."

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But who doesn't know that human memory is very frail, which is one of the reasons for each man having his own truth? Not having now the physical possibility of re-reading in the Italian State Archives the telegram which I drafted that day, or the legal authority to reveal its text if I could read it, I turn to something I wrote in 1960, less than five years after the event, prefacing the book of a friend of mine who was also in Brussels, Signor Albonetti. Here is what I wrote:

"The British Government was therefore invited [by the Six Ministers] to send an observer to the Brussels Conference: a similar invitation was extended to the Secretary-General of the OEEC. During the very first period of the conference, in the summer and autumn of 1955, while various groups of experts, with practically no firm instructions from their respective Governments, were beating about the bush under the impatient eyes of Spaak (who sent them back home

Twelve CND Fallacies

CONCERN *about the existence of nuclear weapons is not the monopoly of those who talk most loudly about their terrible effects. All of us share that concern. All of us, and that certainly includes the Government, realise what would be the horrors of nuclear war. But nuclear weapons have been invented and cannot now be disinvented. It is exactly because nuclear war would be so terrible that the most important responsibility of Government is to adopt policies which will prevent it.*

I believe that most supporters of CND are acting from the highest of motives. But I also believe they are profoundly mistaken and that their policies, if adopted, would reduce, *and not* increase, *the prospects of continuing to preserve the peace in Europe.*

Their arguments contain at least twelve fallacies.

1. First, they argue that armaments have always led to war in the past and that if we have nuclear weapons nuclear war is inevitable. I reject this. I believe nuclear weapons have changed the nature of warfare and that such an assumption is invalid. War has not occurred in Europe for 36 years, a record for this century, and during all that time the West has had nuclear weapons. This is no coincidence.

2. *CND allege that Western planning is now based on fighting and winning a nuclear war. This is simply untrue. We know that in any nuclear war there could be no winners, only losers. Our nuclear weapons are designed to deter aggression. We don't want to use them and if we continue to show that we are prepared to stand up for ourselves I believe we will not have to; for the Russians will realise that they will lose more by aggression than they could hope to gain.*

3. CND argue that if we in Britain had no nuclear weapons we would suffer no nuclear attack. But Japan had no nuclear weapons in 1945.

4. *They claim that one-sided nuclear disarmament by Britain would set an example which others would follow. But which countries would follow? France? China? the USA? the Russians? Not one of them, and certainly not the Russians. As Mr James Callaghan has recently said, "The Russians would laugh at our naivety." It is possible to make progress towards disarmament by negotiation with the Russians, but not if you let them think that you are going to disarm anyway. One-sided disarmament is not a step towards multilateral disarmament, it is a step away from it.*

5. THE FIFTH FALLACY is that the West has not made serious efforts towards arms control and disarmament. The West has been striving towards this objective for decades and we still are. When negotiations fail it is usually because of Russian refusal to accept the verification necessary to ensure agreements are kept. But as the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Helsinki Agreement, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty show, we can get agreement with the Russians, but only if the West is united, patient, and determined—certainly not if we disarm before negotiations start. The negotiations between the Americans and Russians on nuclear forces in Europe, which are about to begin, and which we support, were first suggested by NATO and only accepted by the Russians when they realised that their efforts to divide the West were not succeeding.

6. *Some argue that to have nuclear weapons is immoral. But would it be more moral to give up our nuclear weapons and shelter under the American nuclear umbrella? The logical conclusion of this argument is that we must not be allied with any nuclear power. It would follow that we would have to leave NATO.*

7. Seventh, it is alleged that the Cruise Missile, which NATO has agreed should be installed in Europe in 1983 (unless agreement is reached with the Russians before then on mutual nuclear arms control in Europe) is a "first strike" weapon. This is nonsense. Quite apart from the fact that our strategy is defensive, Cruise is too slow to be used as a first

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PETER BLAKER *is M.P. for Blackpool South (first elected in 1964), and holds at present the post of Minister of State for the Armed Forces in Mrs Thatcher's Government. His remarks are based on a recent speech he gave in Blackpool.*

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as soon as he could) a question of capital importance came to the fore and confronted them. Should the yet unborn European Common Market take the form of a customs union or of a free trade area? The British representative, Mr Bretherton, asked for the floor and, hardly unsealing his lips by which his pipe was firmly held, stated his Government's opinion. With an evangelical calm he made it clear that HM's Government *might* take into consideration Britain's participation in a free trade area; but it had to be *a priori* excluded that the UK might accept to join a customs union, which would have jeopardised the system of Imperial preference."

Achille Albonetti, *La Preistoria degli Stati Uniti d'Europa* (Milan, 1960), pp.33–34

There is, in my opinion, no reason to doubt that it was the subsequent recommendation by the six experts to

strike weapon. The Russians would know if it were launched and would have plenty of time to retaliate. Further, its numbers will be far fewer than the total numbers of Soviet land-based missiles, and their submarine-launched missiles would be invulnerable to such an attack.

8. THE EIGHTH FALLACY *is that the Cruise missile is being imposed by the Americans to make sure any nuclear war is limited to Europe. But it was the Europeans who first suggested its introduction in Europe. They did so in order to deter the Russians from believing that because of the growing weight of Soviet nuclear weapons aimed at Western Europe, and the obsolescence of the West's existing European "theatre nuclear forces" (for example the Vulcan bombers), they could seize Western Europe and present the Americans with a* fait accompli. *Further, the Russians would be aware that any Cruise missile launched against them was American and they have said that any American missile landing on their soil—no matter where from—will be treated as coming from America. These missiles would therefore, in the unlikely event of a war, draw America into the war. They would therefore make Russia less willing to start one.*

9. The ninth fallacy is that the Russians arms build-up is "only a response" to Western arms. The Russians are spending about 13% of their annual wealth for military purposes—more than twice that of any Western country. Their arms spending has risen steadily in real terms over the last 12 years while Western arms spending has fallen. The Russian armed forces have an offensive structure and posture, and have been used for aggression.

10. *The tenth fallacy is that we could give up our own nuclear weapons and tell the Americans to remove theirs from our soil and our territorial waters, yet still rely on the United States to defend us. I find the morality of such a policy somewhat confusing. But in practical terms for Britain, which is strategically one of the most important countries of the alliance, to adopt such a policy must surely bring into question the whole future of* NATO *and the willingness of the United States to defend Western Europe if Europeans are not willing to defend themselves.*

11. THE ELEVENTH FALLACY **of the Unilateral Disarmers is that we can safely rely on conventional weapons alone. In that case any nuclear power which approached us in a threatening manner could force us to do its will. Our conventional armaments would have the value of scrap metal. This policy is, therefore, only valid if we are certain that Russia's intentions towards us are entirely pacific. But this is contrary not only to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, which requires the Soviet Union to spread communism throughout the world, it also contradicts our experience. We have only to ask the Afghans, the Poles, the Czechs, the Hungarians, the people of the Baltic States—all of whom have suffered Russian aggression—to know the answer.**

12. *The twelfth and final fallacy of the one-sided Disarmers is that we are faced with a choice between being "red or dead." Fortunately that is not the choice. There is a third option, which is to be strong enough to prevent war and remain free. That means retaining an effective nuclear deterrent. That has been the choice of successive British Governments for the last thirty years.*

I CANNOT SUM UP **my argument better than by quoting the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury at the Assembly of the British Council of Churches (24 November 1980), speaking on a resolution about unilateral disarmament:**

"I have been struggling with my conscience over unilateral disarmament. Could this be a new way to halt the spiral and begin to put it into reverse? I respect the sincerity of those who take this line but I must say I doubt the exemplary power of this gesture which would be made as we still expect for the foreseeable future to be sheltering under the American nuclear umbrella. And I fear it might serve to destabilise a balance which has undoubtedly contributed to the peace of Europe for 35 years.

"By unilaterally abandoning our nuclear deterrent and refusing to accommodate American missiles on our soil we might further contribute to the disintegration of an alliance between the United States and Europe which has been the basis of our security for the last four decades."

Peter Blaker

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choose a customs union, notwithstanding Mr Bretherton's explicit warning, that caused the "parting of the ways" between Britain and the Six Countries, which fortunately lasted only until 1972.

The sequence of events makes the semantic question whether Britain excluded itself, or was excluded, irrelevant. That the UK Government did not believe that the Six would carry out the Messina blueprint—that in any case Whitehall was more than lukewarm towards European unification—that Britain lost the opportunity to maintain the leadership she had held in Europe and which she had reconfirmed in the Second World War—all this emerges clearly from what R. A. Butler and Russell Bretherton told Michael Charlton. The Foreign Office and the Treasury (with definite support from Anthony Eden) chose to break with the Six on the question of the customs union, basking in their optimistic conviction that the attempt to create an EEC would fail as the EDC had failed.

It just was not to be so.

ROBERTO DUCCI

Bracciano
Italy

Encountering the Irish Question

A Reply to Edward Pearce—By CHARLES DAVIDSON

OVER a hundred years ago, the West Cork newspaper, the *Skibbereen Eagle*, promised its readers that it would keep an eye on Russia. The *Skibbereen Eagle* is no more, but ENCOUNTER gazes unblinkingly eastward. It is a task that needs both eyes, so that when an occasional glance westward is taken, the vision is a little clouded, the perspective a little blurred. Readers of ENCOUNTER who follow its scanty Irish coverage would not learn much, and much of what they would learn is seen as in a glass, darkly.

Of all those engaged in analysis of the situation in Northern Ireland, from Conor Cruise O'Brien to Dervla Murphy, from Mary Holland to David McKittrick, from Michael O'Farrell to Eamonn McCann, from Sir John Biggs-Davison to Anders Boserup, ENCOUNTER has decided that its readers are best served by a writer of facetious parliamentary sketches. Edward Pearce ("The Irish Question, & the Only Solution", ENCOUNTER, August), sensitive as he is to the horrors perpetrated by the IRA, clearly needs a course of instruction in the realities of the war in Northern Ireland. However "endlessly frustrated", has the role of any army at any time really been "peaceful, cleansing and beneficent"? Has Mr Pearce any idea at all of the methods the Army uses, any idea of the number of soldiers prosecuted by the Northern Ireland authorities for acts of illegal violence, any idea of the fear in which the Army is held (once in Armagh, I myself was warned to be careful of the soldiers, a warning the more chilling for its having been given as a friendly tip by a Royal Ulster Constable)? One cannot deny the provocation, or the strain, or the need to combat a military campaign by military methods; but one must deny that the role of the Army is "peaceful, cleansing and beneficent."

"Only one policy is possible in Ulster", says Mr Pearce, speaking of the two-thirds of Ulster that is in the UK, ". . . the keeping of the Queen's peace by the Army; and certainty." This, of course, is simply the old Tory policy of coercion, Lord Salisbury's "resolute government", Walter Long's repudiation of redress of grievances. That this failed to preserve 26 counties for the Union is ignored: Mr Pearce has learned nothing. The "Queen's peace", whatever that may be, has been "kept" by the Army for a decade now, and how many are dead? A decade, and 30,000 people voted for the IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands. A decade, and commission after commission set up by the British Government itself to inquire into various aspects of the keeping of the peace, has condemned how that peace is being kept. A decade, and the European Commission on Human Rights can find that the keeping of this peace entailed the use of brutal and inhuman treatment.

Mr Pearce concludes, "The British Army is entitled to say 'We are the only solution you have.'" But who is "you"? The British Government, the Protestant paramilitaries, the RUC, the Catholic population? Mr Pearce has no word of condemnation for the Protestant paramilitaries, whose bombs killed over thirty people in Dublin, whose killings of individual Catholics have been as horrific as any perpetrated by the IRA; he has no word of commiseration for the Catholics so long ruled as untouchables by the state he seems to admire; he has no word of explanation to the perplexed as to why so large a section of the community should see the IRA as their protectors against "the keepers of the Queen's peace."

All the complexities that compose the Irish question, the burdens of history, the hydra-headed guerrillas, communal strife, the demands of nationalism, religious bigotry, social inequalities, can be countered by knocking the enemy on the head: there must be no political initiatives, and so no reform, merely immobilism backed by force. Has such a Tory argument been heard since 1832? The contributors to ENCOUNTER over the years have included some of the most acute political analysts of our time: *where are they on Ireland*?

To reinforce his solution, Mr Pearce wants to see applied to Northern Ireland "no more world opinion." That is an astonishing prescription to publish in a journal that has some considerable role in forming opinion. I hope your regular commentators protest at this British arrogance that British policy and its application must not be subject to scrutiny or comment. But it is not only shutting out the world that Mr Pearce wants: he even wants people kept in ignorance about Irish history. The BBC, for trying to inform people of that dolorous tale, is branded as a fellow-traveller of the IRA. Plato wanted to ban poets; Mr Pearce would ban both poets and historians.

In the ten-year guerrilla war there has been introduced by a democratic government internment of its citizens

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without trial, the assassination of eminent men and the daily killing of obscure ones, hunger strikes to the death to obtain prison conditions that are commonplace in many countries, acts of great barbarity by the insurgents, techniques of mass surveillance by computer that should have no place in our society, and a thousand other evils. ENCOUNTER's response is a mix of historical blindness, political simplemindedness, and an appeal to exclude British policy from foreign criticism: three things that *mutatis mutandis* it is ENCOUNTER's policy to combat. There is no reason why that policy should not extend to John Bull's Other Island—must truth be a casualty of our war too?

CHARLES DAVIDSON

Kealkil
Co. Cork
Ireland

As Seen from Malibu

EDWARD PEARCE writes (ENCOUNTER, August) that

> "only one policy is possible in Ulster. . . . Boring old Britain has to break the hearts of the gangsters by the assurance that plodding, footsore, perhaps over-restrictive soldiers will continue to stand between the Irish and their terrible historic selves."

This seems a position full of contradictions. One reads here (are *all* the reports false?) that the Unionist majority in Northern Ireland considers its province "as English as Yorkshire" and itself, presumably, as English as Yorkshiremen. If so, then the fighting in Ireland is between English and Irish; it is a colonial war; and the question one expects to hear asked is: Of what interest is it to Britain to retain this colony? If the safety of the colonists is Britain's only remaining interest, then is indefinite occupation by the British army the only way to protect them?

If, on the other hand, the fighting is between the Irish and their terrible selves, then the war is a civil war. There are times in a civil war when one side may call in a foreign ally as, recently enough, one side in the Vietnamese civil war called in the United States. Usually, however, if the foreign ally concludes that perpetual military occupation is the price of victory, he calls the war lost. That is, whether he stays or goes, it *is* lost. President Reagan notwithstanding, most Americans do not consider Viet Nam worse off today than it would have been had our peacekeeping mission there continued. One wonders why Mr Pearce takes so different a view of the indefinite, inevitably violent keeping of the Queen's peace in Northern Ireland by the British army.

From this distance, what strikes the observer most is that Protestants and Catholics, English and Irish (and Scots and Welsh) live amicably together both in Catholic Eire and in Protestant Britain. Were there to be an independent Ulster, an Ulster denied the very possibility of union with Britain, could it long hold out against the common culture of its citizens? One expects there would be a bloodbath. No great loss this: there is one already. But it would end, and the waters of religious indifference would close over the corpses.

If that happens, but even if it does not, Britain will acquit herself the better in Northern Ireland the less she consults her honour and the more she consults her self-interest. I quite agree with Mr Pearce that the IRA hunger-strikers have been sentimentalised by the press. But the cause of peace is not served by an answering sentimentalisation of the British army.

It is an endearing quality in the British (I confess) that they can grow sentimental at the thought that their country is boring; but Mr Pearce would turn this quality to demagogic purposes. And as for his characterisation of the Army in Northern Ireland as "peaceful, cleansing, beneficent and endlessly frustrated", I suspect that the average soldier out on patrol would have a pungent word for it.

JOHN RUSSIANO MILES

Malibu
California

LORD, the abuse one must take if one says a word against the boys with Black & Decker drills! Candidly, neither Charles Davidson nor John Russiano Miles deserves lengthy answers. Still, this is England and courtesy must triumph.

Mr Davidson, of course, answers himself on the topic of individual soldiers who break the law. They are indeed prosecuted. As to Army methods of interrogation, when these were criticised by the European Commission on Human Rights, Britain accepted and adopted the criticism, though there was nothing done which an IRA man would not regard as kindergarten-stuff.

As for "education in Irish history", yes indeed, I would to God that no one were instructed in it. Perhaps in the absence of that marination in self-pity and hatred about ancient wrongs, 2,000 lives would not have been lost! As for coercion, I know the historical reference but I thought that was what people practised when they shot you in front of your children, Fenian style. Oh yes, and one last word—Aristotle-Shmaristotle, somebody must tell Mr Davidson about Galileo.

As for Mr Miles, what answer does one make to a man who actually calls for a bloodbath? Or speaks about Viet Nam without speaking about the "boat people"?

As for calling the Ulster Protestants "colonists", should not Mr Miles (resident in California, territory settled in the 19th century) explain his position to families settled in Ulster since the time of James I? And is not some sort of apology owing to the Western American Indians, or have the waters of indifference risen satisfactorily above their corpses?

Between the whining of Mr Davidson and the ferocity of Mr Miles I do not know if either is "Irish", but their arguments are superbly so.

EDWARD PEARCE

Dangerous Ethnicity?

NATHAN GLAZER's confidence in the ability of Anglo-Saxon societies to handle ethnic diversity and the immigration of ethnic groups ("The Ethnic Factor", ENCOUNTER, July) is perhaps over-optimistic in the case of New Zealand at least. New Zealand's mini-society of three million displays many of the familiar signs of tension between the country's dominant ethnic group and its original Maoris, resulting from inequities between these ethnic groups in the distribution of power, wealth, education, employment and so on, while the legal status of the relatively recently arriving Pacific Islanders is summed

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up in the new and expressive coining of "over-stayer." (Indeed, at one stage, police were regularly demanding of brown-skinned passers-by inspection of their passports to the natural indignation of Maoris whose forbears have occupied this land for the past thousand years and more.)

The New Zealand evidence suggests that a fundamental shaper of inter-ethnic attitudes and relations is simply the proportionate size of the ethnic majority and, therefore, how much actual experience members of that dominant group are likely to have had of other ethnicities (as opposed to learning about them through the media or by rumour and stereotype). New Zealand's population is some 80% of European descent, of which about 80% are of British descent. This 80-on-80 proportion means that there exists among most of the people a powerful consensus as to what the definition of "a civilised human being" is—he, or she, is what a British-descended European is! All other ethnicities must therefore be the legitimate objects of popular and legal suspicion as offering challenges to (as through their very existence *virtually threatening the overthrow of*) the very basis of society and culture—the consensus about behaviour, language, morality, upbringing, life-styles, life-goals.

Accordingly, New Zealand's major social institutions operate as if everyone really were mono-ethnically European. And so when ethnic minorities suffer greater infant mortality and lesser life expectancies—when they earn lower incomes, fail at school, seldom (unless pretty thoroughly culturally assimilated) gain positions of bureaucratic or political power—it all goes to show to the majority's satisfaction that in truth the White Way *is* the Right Way.

The saddest aspect of it all is less the inevitable conflicts and injustices that our society experiences, than the sheer human waste implied in the rejection of or a refusal to take seriously other cultural maps of realities—a fear, if you like, of the challenge of enrichment to the individual and social/cultural soul that sharing, setting side by side, learning from other ethnicities' perspectives, insights, ways of solving problems, ways of being human, of living in this world, brings.

But, thank heaven, melting-pots do not entirely melt. Indeed the pressure of such an ideology can congeal an ore of rejection. There is still time to learn that it is not from difference that the greatest dangers come.

D. B. H. GADD

Auckland
New Zealand

Is Psychoanalysis dying?

WALTER REICH ("Psychiatry's Second Coming: The Way We Analyse Now", ENCOUNTER, August) simply doesn't know what he is talking about when he asserts that psychoanalysis is dying in America in both clinical and applied divisions.

Your readers would better read a book like Reuben Fine's *History of Psychoanalysis* to see the vast *expansion* of lay and medical psychoanalysis in America in the past decade, or look at the recent issues of *The Journal of Psychoanalytic Anthropology* or of *The Journal of Psychohistory* to read about the jump from 2 to over 200 courses in psychohistory or the formation of the International Psychohistorical Association with several hundred new members around the world, or the formation of the new Psychoanalytic Division 39 of the American Psychological Association.

Repeating psychiatric chit-chat—which is all Reich and Colin Brewer and David Stannard rely on—is no substitute for historical evidence, and your readers should know that this is all they are being fed in your recurring anti-psychoanalytic articles.

I will be pleased to send the full literature on the historical evidence to anyone interested in facts not fantasy.

LLOYD DEMAUSE
Director, Institute for Psychohistory
Founding Editor, The Journal of Psychohistory
Founding President,
International Psychohistorical Association

2315 Broadway
New York

THERE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN an "expansion" of lay analysis in America, just as there has been an expansion of every possible (and impossible) form of what is called, in endlessly undefined ways, "therapy." How "vast" that lay expansion has been I don't know. I do know, however, that what Mr deMause calls medical psychoanalysis—the psychoanalysis practised by psychiatric physicians, and the psychoanalysis with which I most concerned myself in my article—can hardly be said to have undergone such a growth in recent years, suffering, instead, a decline in the number of young physicians applying to train for it.

As for the expansion of psychohistory, I think that the quantity, however much of it there is, doesn't amount to quality. To be sure, there seems to have been a spurt in the number of persons eager to discover in someone's toilet-training or presumed birth fantasies the explanation for his war crimes. But an increasing number of historians and psychoanalysts have been expressing their dismay at this development, which unfairly throws into disrepute the work of those psychohistorians who have been more careful and modest about their theories and methods.

As it happens, my essay was not "anti-psychoanalytic." What I tried to do was identify a shift in American psychiatric paradigms—the shift from psychoanalysis to biological psychiatry—and to explain it. I argued that the same energetic search for Optimism that had fuelled the engine of psychoanalysis during the early part of this century—that had pushed it to generate promises it could never fulfil, and that had driven it, for that reason, into decline—was now fuelling the engine of the new biologism. And I warned that, unless that search, that deep flow of need, is recognised and checked, biologism too might be driven, by way of a similar cycle of overpromise and disappointment, toward a similar decline, thereby depleting the profession of those contributions by biological psychiatry that are real and useful—just as it seems about to deplete the profession of those contributions by psychoanalysis that have also been real and useful.

WALTER REICH

National Institute of Mental Health
Rockville, Maryland
USA

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London

INTONATION: **"Wants pawn term, dare worsted ladle gull hoe lift wetter murder inner ladle cordage, honor itch offer lodge, dock, florist."**

This is how you would start the story of one well-known fairy tale if half the English language disappeared overnight.

At least you would if you were H. L. Chace, a former professor of French at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Chace's linguistic musings, now well known in the United States, were prompted in an attempt to teach his students the importance of intonation.

***Little Red Riding Hood* is renamed by Chace *Ladle Rat Rotten Hut*, the moral of which is "yonder nor sorghum stenches shut ladle gulls stopper torque wet strainers . . . ."**

THE TIMES

Manchester

DOOM: *At every revival of "Heartbreak House" [Eric Shorter writes] you are asked to think of Chekhov because Shaw wrote it "in the Russian manner." And so anxious is Jonathan Hales's production for the Royal Exchange, Manchester, to remind us of "The Cherry Orchard" that he lowers over the company in the last portentous act a leafy branch of such profuse and actual arborescence that the actors can scarcely see one another as they converse amid the threat of doom.*

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

CHE ZARA ZARA: *Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips may be the exception to prove the rule in the choice of the name* "Zara" *for their recently born daughter. A palace spokesman reported that "Princess Anne and Captain Mark Phillips just liked the name. They do not know anyone called Zara." But ordinary people prefer the most familiar names. Parallel studies were carried out in England and Australia. All participants were presented with a quasi-random list of 100 male or 100 female entries from the* Oxford Dictionary of English Christian Names. *"Familiarity" and "liking" of names were highly significantly related in the studies at both ends of the globe. In England,* David, Peter, Richard *and* John *were among both the five most familiar and the five most liked names, while* Balthasar *and* Fulbert *were neither common nor very favourably regarded.*

The researchers give no examples of most and least liked girls' names, so it is not possible to comment on attitudes to Zara (meaning "bright as the dawn"). Nevertheless the familiarity will doubtless increase as it is now attached to the sixth in line to the throne. It will certainly become more popular—thus destroying the royals' case for choosing it.

NEW SOCIETY

London

GAMES READERS PLAY: *Is there an offence known perhaps as shop-filling as well as shop-lifting?*

I would like to think [Alan Brien writes] of the panic engendered among the accountants and market researchers if they discovered that after the Sales some of the stock had increased rather than decreased, a dreaded example of negative buying which if carried to an extreme would mean a genuine Bankruptcy Sale. In my Oxford days, a BBC producer friend of mine carried out a similar operation with the arts magazine, Mandrake, *to which he had taken an irrational antipathy. Inspired by a thoughtless remark of mine that it was the only publication which screamed when picked up from a bookstall, he collected every copy floating around Junior Common Rooms and used them as a reservoir to top up all the piles on public sale to thirteen. We never saw the result, but we cherished the image of its editor-owner, Arthur Boyars, when he called in to check his circulation, being told by Blackwells or Smiths that not only had none been sold but that the returns were mysteriously more than the original order.*

PUNCH

London

BARDOLOGY: **Americans do not feel entirely at ease with Shakespeare. But then, in all fairness, we must ask ourselves whether we British [John Heilpern writes] are so at ease with a triple-decker pastrami sandwich on a toasted bagel.**

In spite of every effort, it is still an American problem of "relating to" Shakespeare, as one "relates to" real life. When Joseph Papp, the most powerful and renowned theatre producer in New York, was taken as a child to see "Hamlet" for the first time, his only memory of it was of wondering why the actors didn't speak like real people.

When he came to direct his own production of *Hamlet*, his Prince therefore appeared as a peanut vendor and spoke the famous "TV or not TV" soliloquy in a Puerto Rican accent.

And little seems to have changed over the years. His recent production of "The Tempest" included a Sumo wrestler, a W. C. Fields impressionist, pinky-ringed gangsters, what appeared to be a Xavier Cugat floorshow, and a helicopter.

THE TIMES

Brighton

MASSES-MEDIA: **Relations between ITN and Southern Television, which is covering the Labour Party conference for ITV, are a little strained. Southern TV ignorance of Labour Party politics is such that they were unable to identify left-wing chairman Alex Kitson on the platform. An exasperated ITN man, asked to help and explain to which organisation Kitson belonged, said poker-faced: "*KGB*." Up on the screen duly rolled "*Alex Kitson, KGB*."**

THE STANDARD

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A premier publisher in the United States
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Edward Shils

needs no spokesman or interpreter.
He has written, over five decades, and spoken so much for himself—and on topics of such importance—as to defy encapsulation in summary form. Nor, I surmise, would so proud, independent, and often mordant a thinker welcome an essay in the art of the impossible. None the less—as is clear from the three volumes of his Selected Papers that have so far been published—he has never lacked a sense of intellectual mission, and has never shrunk from distilling, out of a long experience, a cultural mode that has meaning (and political significance) for others than himself. That mode combines an abiding concern for social thought with a deep understanding of the fragility of social frameworks: in exploring that mode he has an especial interest in the responsibilities and temptations of the intellectual classes in modern societies. He is firmly, though, on occasion, pessimistically engaged in grasping the precarious grounds of political liberty.
—Julius Gould, *Encounter*

The three volumes of the Selected Papers of Edward Shils are:
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